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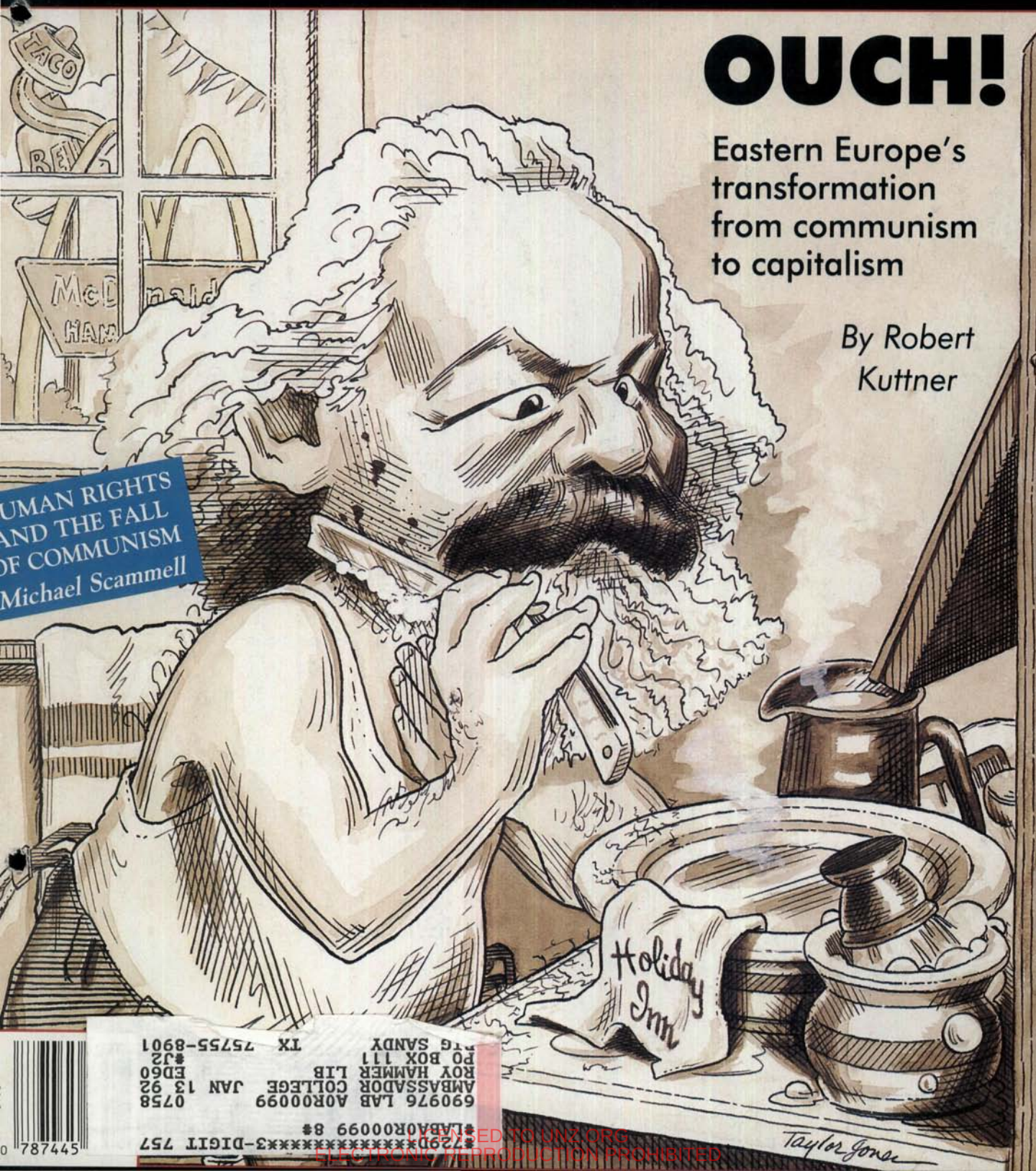

OUCH!

Eastern Europe's transformation from communism to capitalism

By Robert Kuttner

UMAN RIGHTS
AND THE FALL
OF COMMUNISM
Michael Scammell

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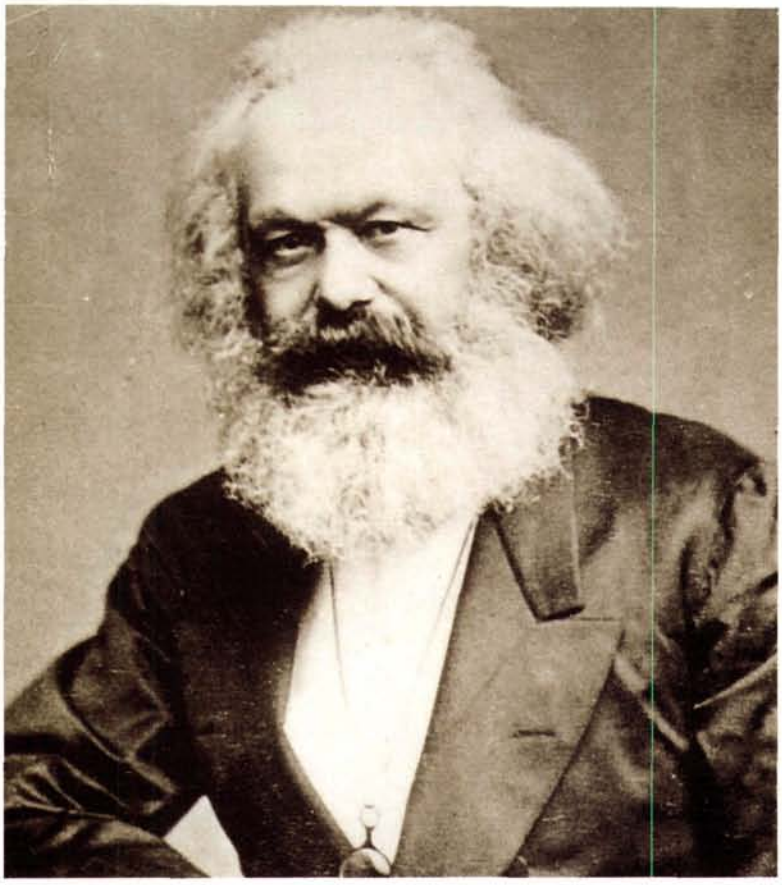

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
A Weekly Journal of Opinion

FEBRUARY 25, 1991

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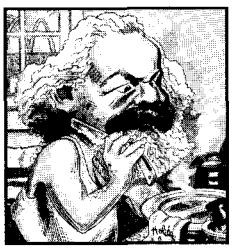

Cover by Taylor Jones for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Article on page 24.

4 **MICHAEL KINSLEY** TRB: AFRICAN TIME One man, one vote, one swimming pool.

6 **CORRESPONDENCE** Nationalism gone amok, Galileo's wisdom, &c.

7 **THE EDITORS** NOTHING The only domestic policy George Bush has left is a capital gains tax cut. And even that he's not serious about. TERMS OF INTERNMENT Israel's government exploits the state of emergency. NOTEBOOK Gays in the Gulf, &c.

10 **WALTER LAQUEUR** JERUSALEM POSTCARD: BATTLE SCARS Memories of 1948 in 1991.

12 **MORTON KONDRACKE** THE FINE PRINT What the White House's 'New World Order' means in diplomatic practice: American hegemony under a United Nations flag.

15 **FRED BARNES** WHITE HOUSE WATCH: BRAVE NEW GIMMICK How Brent Scowcroft dreamed up a not-so-brand-new slogan and how George Bush fell in love with it.

16 **JOHN BRODIE** GODFATHER III½ The Mafia hits the skids in Manhattan.

18 **JACOB WEISBERG** MEANS OF DISSENT The mildewed neo-anti-war movement.

20 **EDWARD LUTTWAK** GROUND NUTS How the Army is wrecking our war against Iraq.

24 **ROBERT KUTTNER** THE DUSTBIN OF ECONOMICS Marx never got around to thinking about the transformation from communism to capitalism. Now the former Communist countries of Eastern Europe are trying to create economies without a theory.

28 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: THINGS CHANGE John Malkovich in *The Object of Beauty.*

29 **MICHAEL SCAMMELL** THE PROPHET AND THE WILDERNESS Andrei Sakharov's conversion from Stalin Prize winner to dissident is a dramatic example of the transformative power of the idea of human rights—an idea that crippled communism.

34 **NICHOLAS CHRISTOPHER** POEM *Drinking Cold Water on the Acropolis at Lindos*

36 **SIDRA DEKOVEN EZRAHI** SHATTERING MEMORIES *Variable Directions* by Dan Pagis

39 **ARTHUR WALDRON** THE LONGER MARCH *China's Crisis: Dilemmas of Reform and Prospects for Democracy* by Andrew J. Nathan

42 **MICHAEL KELLY** AMMAN DIARIST: SOUK KOOK Guess who's buying Saddam souvenirs.

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FROM SOUTH AFRICA

African time

Police say the prisoner died while trying to escape. The deceased's relatives complain that there were bruises and abrasions all over the body. The authorities have promised to investigate. Etc., etc. It could be almost anywhere in the world. But the story was in the Johannesburg *Weekly Mail* last month (it made page three), and what caught my eye was this detail: "Police told Maphumulo's attorneys that he had drowned in the swimming pool at Protea police station. . . ." Yes, in South Africa, even the police stations have swimming pools.

Describing "the sweet life in white South Africa" in his recent memoir, *My Traitor's Heart* (Atlantic Monthly Press), the South African journalist Rian Malan writes: "Anywhere else in the world, save perhaps the United States, a blue-collar worker would consider himself terribly lucky to be floating face up in cool water under a hot blue sky in a country garden. In South Africa, however, such an experience was a white man's virtual birthright." Even in the United States, though, not too many blue-collar workers own country houses with swimming pools.

High-minded white liberal South Africans love to tell you, no doubt correctly, what a failure apartheid has been as an economic system. That is why the business establishment turned against it. But apartheid also enabled many, many whites to enjoy a bigger piece out of the smaller pie. The legal exclusion of the black majority from the best jobs and lands, the assured supply of servants and cheap labor, and so on have given middle-class whites a lifestyle that free market forces alone, wonderful as they are, could not duplicate.

Politically, there are reasons for optimism about South Africa right now. On February 1 President F. W. de Klerk announced that his government would repeal the last three pillars of legal apartheid—including, to everyone's surprise, the Population Registration Act, which classifies people by race. The government and the African National Congress ended months of bickering by agreeing in January to a multiparty conference as the next stage in devising a new, nonracial constitution. The ANC's Nelson Mandela and his black rival Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, whose followers have been slaughtering one another by the thousands, have kissed and made up.

But the real trauma is going to be economic. Everyone recognizes that any political solution will create powerful economic expectations among blacks. What good is freedom without electricity and plumbing? Where is the payoff for their decades of struggle? Meanwhile, even liberal whites seem resigned to the notion that the economy will shrink, not grow, when the blacks take over. They see the ANC's present internal chaos as a harbinger of what the whole country will be like. "African time," said one businessman with a smile and a shrug when I mentioned that a black pol had been very late for an appointment.

Two questions get muddled in discussing new economic arrangements for South Africa. One is how to create growth; the other is how to share the goodies. In fact, the growth question is largely settled. Those who are convinced that blacks will bungle any economic system are beyond consolation, but there's little need to fear that South Africa's future leaders will make the wrong choice of systems. They have not missed the moral of recent history. It's a cliché in South Africa that the country is lucky the death of apartheid coincided with the collapse of communism. I heard this from the government; I heard it from the ANC. The grim experience of African socialism is also duly noted.

But that doesn't settle the issue. Even the most devoted believer in free market capitalism as a creator of wealth (and I'm pretty close) would have a hard time looking at South Africa and saying: fine, let's start tomorrow with a free market and forget about who's got what at the moment. There are poorer countries than South Africa and richer ones, but none where so much Western-style affluence and Third World poverty exist side by side. And this disparity was a deliberate creation of the government. The about-to-be-repealed Group Areas Act, to take just one example, forcibly removed 3.5 million black people from "white" areas and dumped them in arid "homelands." Should these people be satisfied with the good news that from now on it's a level playing field.

The end of apartheid will bring some savings from the dismantling of the security state, some economic growth from the new opportunities available to black talent, some payoff from the end of South Africa's economic isolation through sanctions. But even the most optimistic scenario does not foresee growth alone providing enough resources to do justice to the black majority without impinging on

continued on page 41

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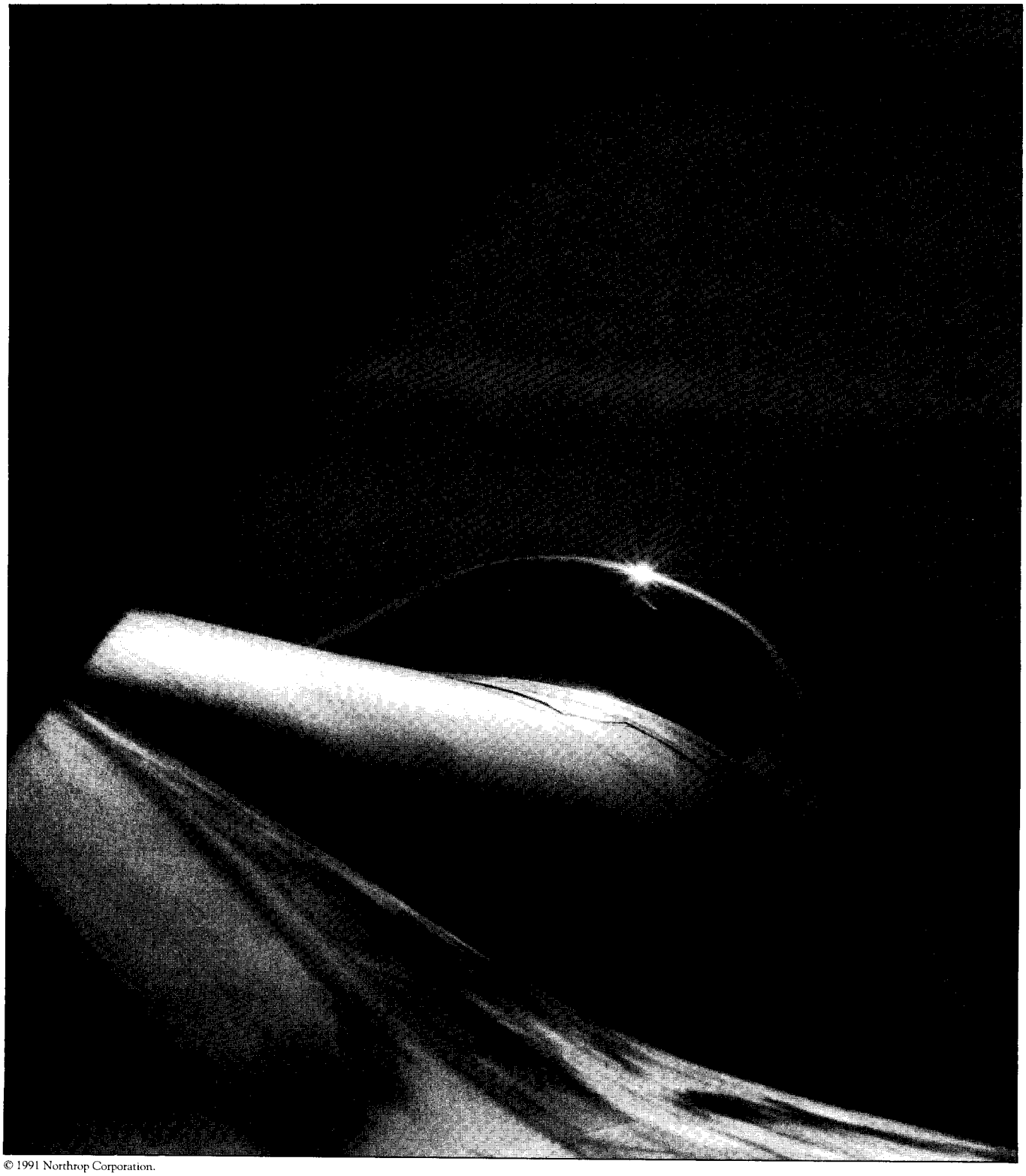

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CORRESPONDENCE

National guards

To the editors:

In "Pax Sovietica" (January 21), Ronald Steel accuses pro-nationalists who seek intellectual support in the American war of independence of "ignoring that ours was an anti-colonial, not an ethnic, struggle." What makes Mr. Steel think that anti-colonialism and ethnicity are mutually exclusive? Most of the liberation struggles of modern times have been both (Greece's independence from Turkey, India's from Britain, Algeria's from France). The mere fact that the Soviet empire is conveniently situated in one huge contiguous land mass, rather than scattered in distant lands, should not seduce us into ignoring the colonialist conquests that brought it into being.

In addition, Mr. Steel equates the Soviet nationalities' aspirations with those of the Confederate secessionists during our Civil War. But each of the seceding states had previously made a voluntary choice to enter our Union; most of the Soviet peoples were brought at the point of a gun into theirs.

As Mr. Steel correctly observes, however, our century's talismanic obsession with ethnicity has marred the ability of many previously peaceful peoples to coexist in harmony. He might have added that the rights of the individual—the "nationality of one"—have too often been shunted aside in the all-absorbing quest for ethnic self-realization.

Most ironic, though, is the difficulty rebellious nationalists often experience in realizing that they themselves may be blocking the ethnic aspirations of others. So in the Old World we see the heels of the newly vocal Soviet republics being roundly nipped by smaller nationalities most of us have never heard of (as well as by implanted populations of Russians); and in the New, we hardly know whether to chuckle or weep as we watch the long-oppressed Québecois turn around and ram a massive hydroelectric project down the loudly protesting throats of the Cree Indians.

HOWARD I. FOX
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

The convulsive historical dynamism of these days was ably outlined by all of the pieces in your January 21 issue. Unfortunately, the Bloody Sunday massacre in Vilnius makes the hopes expressed in the articles that further violence could be avoided bleak indeed.

Your editorial "Let the Peoples Go" sketches a moral future for nations. Hope placed in the peoples promises a freer future than the hothouse of any "New World Order." Freely contracted and desired political units will make for tomorrow's stability. The self-liberation of Eastern Europe is also an opportunity for an inner renewal in the West, a chance to rediscover its own freedom and revolutionary ideology of liberalism. This opportunity should not be missed.

VEJAS LIULEVICIUS
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Hero envy

To the editors:

Your editorial on the Rushdie conversion ("Midnight's Conversion," January 21) appropriately quotes from Bertolt Brecht's *Galileo* but omits the most relevant lines, when Galileo returns from his recantation and faces his disillusioned and anguished assistant, Andrea.

> ANDREA: "Unhappy the land that breeds no hero!"
>
> GALILEO: "No, Andrea, unhappy the land that needs a hero."

We should take the historic view of Mr. Brecht rather than the idealistic one of Andrea.

M. G. WURTELE
Santa Monica, California

Mistaken identity

To the editors:

In his review of *The Godfather, Part III*, Stanley Kauffmann errs in identifying the character of Calo (played by Franco Citti) as the bodyguard who runs from the booby-trapped car in the original *Godfather* film. Thus, Mr. Kauffmann is wrong to question Calo's appearance in *Godfather III* as a loyal Corleone retainer.

It is Michael Corleone's *other* Sicilian bodyguard, Fabrizzio (played by Angelo Infanti), who betrays him. In fact, Michael spots him running and asks, in Italian, "Fabrizzio, where are you going?" When Fabrizzio keeps running, Michael realizes what is happening, but calls out a split second too late to save his Sicilian wife, Apollonia, from the bomb intended for him.

A more relevant question is how Calo, who in the original film is seen loading luggage into the trunk of the car only moments before the blast, managed to survive the enormous explosion. In Mario Puzo's novel Calo was standing next to the car when it exploded, and was killed along with Apollonia.

ERIC H. NEWMAN
New York, New York

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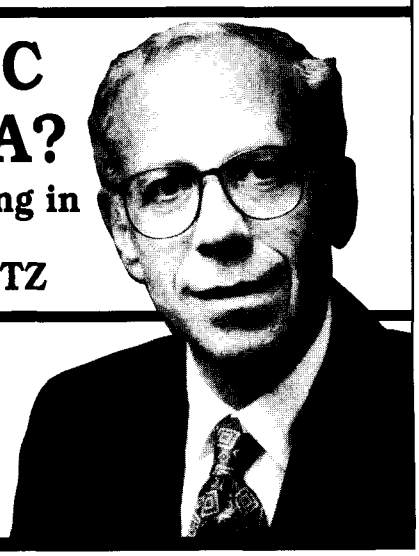

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FEBRUARY 25, 1991

NOTHING

It has been said of George Bush—by George Bush, for example—that he lacks "the vision thing." He tried to remedy that in his State of the Union address, the bulk of which was devoted to the Gulf war. In form if not in delivery, some phrases had a derivative sonorousness ("We are engaged in a great struggle in the skies and on the seas and sands"). The president even melded Churchill's praise of his countrymen for their resolve under Nazi bombardment ("their finest hour") with a current cliché of TV talking heads ("defining moment") to produce "a defining hour," a coinage somewhat short on St. Crispin's Day resonance.

The passages of the State of the Union that touched on domestic affairs, however, were not borrowed from Churchill. Instead, whole phrases had been carted from the Democrats' storage shed and riveted into place in the text. In this sense Mr. Bush's speech was, at the rhetorical level, a goodbye to Reaganism. Tapping out his message on the Democrats' boilerplate, the president hammered the signifiers: "Investment in America's future . . . a critical investment in our transportation infrastructure . . . record levels of federal investment . . . comprehensive national energy strategy . . . a blueprint . . . reform plan . . . every American's right." Was Mr. Bush announcing his conversion to national planning directed by the federal government? Or was he merely adopting a momentary political identity as disposable as, say, his previous identity as Reagan's shadow?

A week after the president's address, his budget was unveiled. Richard Darman, the sinuous budget director, a man for all ideological seasons, hailed the document he had produced as "reformist"—the basis of nothing less than the beginning of "a new domestic order," though he conceded this was "less grand than a New World Order." The connection, or disconnection, between the domestic and international was left unexplained. No matter. This was not the old alchemical trickle-down economics, which had been the ultimate rationale of the Reagan-era budgets. "Here is spending on people of all incomes," Mr. Darman enthused. His conceit is that "fairness," the perennial Democratic theme, is embedded in his budget and thus suddenly belongs to the Bush administration.

The underlying principle of the budget, however, is something else. As James Sasser, chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, has pointed out, it is based on the agreement reached last fall that mandates a system of endless budgetary "cannibalizing." What Mr. Darman has highlighted as the administration's new concerns (which might be dubbed, pace Darman on the misbegotten "new paradigm," as neo-Me-Tooism) is essentially the robbing of one program to pay for another. It is proposed, for example, that the Special Supplement Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (which Mr. Reagan sought to cut) would rise from $2.4 billion to $2.6 billion, slightly above the rate of inflation and less than the increase granted by Congress last year. In the meantime, foster care for children would be cut by 16 percent to $2.2 billion. The Bush budget is replete with many such ironies. The total addition of the figures in the "fairness" column comes to less than zero: according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the Bush budget would cut outright $760 million in non-entitlement programs for those with low incomes. The president acknowledges that deep problems face the country but has no intention of devising policies or funding to deal with them.

But Mr. Bush has done even less than this. During all recent recessions, all administrations, including Mr. Reagan's, favored a supplemental appropriation for unemployment insurance benefits for jobless workers who have been looking for work for more than six months. But Mr. Bush has broken with his predecessors in his extraordinary indifference, which exceeds even the oblivious Mr. Reagan's. Mr. Bush acts as if the recession can be dealt with by pretending it will disappear if he holds his breath until the summer. His plan for dealing with the recession is the power of positive thinking, a mind cure.

Political artifice is apparent even behind Darman's

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worthiest idea: making families with incomes of more than $150,000 a year pay higher Medicare premiums. Last year, when the premiums on the same upper-income group for catastrophic health coverage were doubled, the aroused elderly lobbies forced 200 representatives to change their votes and rescind the legislation. The Bush proposal would now triple the payments—a good idea, but one the administration knows very well won't go anywhere. But there is a political logic. When the Democrats propose programs that involve spending, particularly an anti-recession program, the administration can counter by suggesting that the funds be raised by these spurious cuts.

It is relatively easy to discern the sleight of hand in the administration's presentation by examining the numbers and what past administrations have done. But one has to have a grasp of the inner workings of Washington to understand the dimension of Mr. Bush's latest emptiness. The heart of his budget—and of his domestic program—is the capital gains tax cut. If he has believed in nothing else, it has seemed that at least he has believed in becoming the capital gains president. In 1989 he actually exerted himself on behalf of the idea until it was struck down by Congress. His administration claimed that the tax cut would raise $9.1 billion in revenues over five years. But the congressional Joint Committee on Taxation projected an $11 billion loss. Its study also showed that two-thirds of the benefits would go to taxpayers with incomes above $200,000.

Now Mr. Bush has revived the idea. Or has he? In his State of the Union he called for the creation of a bipartisan commission headed by Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan to work out the differences, which Mr. Bush called "technical." The president wants no turmoil while he strides on the world stage, and his plan for capital gains will ensure domestic tranquillity. Congress has already defeated Mr. Bush on the issue; it will undoubtedly defeat him again if he persists. By naming Mr. Greenspan, the Fed chairman who is supposed to be above the political fray but who has declared himself in favor of a zero percent capital gains tax, he has hardly suggested an impartial figure to lead the search for some vague middle ground. It is also a dangerous innovation for the chief of monetary policy to be thrust into the making of fiscal policy. Yet everyone in Congress understands that by conjuring up the commission, Mr. Bush has revealed that in truth he doesn't really care about capital gains. His talk of it is a sop to his angry right wing for breaking his no-tax pledge, a compensation for his neo-Me-Too rhetoric. With a commission in place, nothing will happen for a long time.

But it will take a long time even to establish the commission that is to untangle all knots. Mr. Bush's charge to Mr. Greenspan is a mystery. Is he asking him to clear up the controversy over whether a capital gains tax cut will lose revenue? Is he asking the commission to decide if a cut will stimulate a recessionary economy? Nobody knows the questions, so the inevitable, irreconcilable conflict over the answers can't begin. But then, nobody knows who will be on this commission or what will be the time frame in which it operates. What is happening here is this: nothing.

And this nothingness is the centerpiece of the budget. It is not a philosophical abstraction, but a statistical hollowness: for the assumptions of all the other calculations in the budget rest on the wholly unsubstantiated claims that there will be a capital gains tax cut and that it will generate $8.1 billion over five years. By making this impossible himself, the president has also made an absurd fantasy of his budget director's "new domestic order." What this defining hour has defined is a president who, as far as domestic policy is concerned, is simply not serious.

TERMS OF INTERNMENT

The Israeli government appears to have taken leave of its senses, at least its political ones. Having captured the admiration of Americans, Europeans, and many Arabs by staying its hand from retaliating against Iraq, having captured their sympathy by means of Saddam Hussein's demonstration of his desire to destroy the Jewish state, Israel's government has suddenly and bizarrely chosen to show its dark side.

First it arrested Sari Nuseibeh, a prominent Palestinian intellectual and activist in Jerusalem, "for subversive activities of collecting security information for Iraqi intelligence." Nuseibeh's detention for six months was promptly reduced by an Israeli court to three months—Israel's judges continue to stand between the Likud government and the realization of its uglier designs—but the government has still produced no evidence against Nuseibeh, and he remains under arrest. Nuseibeh is one of the most proven moderates in the Palestinian world, politically and temperamentally.

And then, in a gratuitous slap not only at its allies in the international community but also at the majority of Jews in Israel and America who have nothing but contempt for "transfer," the idea that the Palestinians should be expelled by the Israelis across the Jordan River, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir arranged to admit Rehavam Zeevi, the spokesman for that idea in the Knesset, into the Cabinet. Zeevi is, in a word, Meir Kahane's successor in Israeli politics. It was some consolation, to be sure, that the prime minister failed to secure the support of many of his closest colleagues in the Cabinet; David Levy, Dan Meridor, and Ehud Olmert, all of them important figures in the Likud, refused to vote for Zeevi's legitimation. (Moshe Arens merely abstained.) Still, the transferer will take his place in their company.

This was not only a political mistake, it was also a moral one. And it was a reminder that Yitzhak Shamir and the jingoists around him are not averse to

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exploiting one of the most dangerous and delicate moments in Israel's history, to taking advantage of a war, for their own small and twisted purposes. Perhaps they believe that by taking Palestinian moderates off the scene (not a Herculean labor under any circumstance, and certainly not these days, when almost the entire Palestinian population is cheering Saddam's Scuds), and by introducing Israeli maximalism into the highest reaches of government, they may pre-empt the diplomatic dangers that await them at the end of the war. But that, too, is a mistake of historical proportions. Whether the prime minister likes it or not, the renewal of the peace process will follow, as the day the night, the success of Operation Desert Storm. Right now the government of Israel should be formulating its own realistic peace proposals, lest it otherwise be forced into the kinds of contrivances that the Iraqi-PLO alliance should have made obsolete.

NOTEBOOK

PINK, WHITE, AND BLUE: According to their lawyers, over a dozen openly gay and lesbian reservists have been called up for the Gulf war and will be sent to the front. The blanket Pentagon rule about homosexuality being incompatible with military service has, in wartime, been left to the discretion of commanding officers. In other words, the military now appears to believe that homosexuals are a threat to its competence and integrity in peacetime, but fine soldiers in war. It would be hard to find a clearer admission of the silliness—and cynicism—of the current rule. The military knows gays don't make bad soldiers: they can be trusted under fire. They know there are plenty of gay men and women already in uniform who do a fine, often great, job. Yet they continue their policy of discrimination, out of deference to bigotries they no longer even believe in themselves.

FLIGHT OF FANCY: The prize for the worst case of war hysteria to date doesn't go to the FBI or the INS. It's Pan Am's. The airline has banned all Iraqi passengers from its domestic and international flights, regardless of whether they pose a security risk. Since Lockerbie, Pan Am may be especially sensitive on this score, but is it really likely that an Iraqi terrorist would try to carry a bomb on a plane himself? Wouldn't mere ownership of an Iraqi passport elicit sufficient scrutiny? What rankles is the assumption of treachery—the same one made about Japanese-Americans during World War II. Many Iraqis in this country are refugees from persecution at home. One of them, Salan H. Salman, was jailed by Saddam and granted political asylum here in 1984. He has filed a suit challenging the rule. Pan Am should end the rule, offer him an apology—and a book of free tickets for his trouble. And not to Baghdad.

BART INTO THE BREACH: While others mull over the effects of the Gulf conflict on geopolitics, Californians are coming to grips with a more immediately pressing issue: How will it affect the sitcom industry? A recent report in *The Los Angeles Times* explores the war's impact on the TV show "Major Dad." According to the *Times*, the program "will have to deal with the often unfunny ironies of a genuine blood-and-guts war. To the comedy writers of 'Major Dad' that poses a major challenge." Coming attraction: "Cheers" grapples with the issue of public flogging for booze possession in Riyadh.

SO WHY DID YOU HIRE HIM IN THE FIRST PLACE?: It's a mite hard to feel sorry for Ed Koch, and even harder to be dismayed that someone finally saw fit to shut him up. But CBS's firing of Mr. Koch as the host of the New York talk show "Sunday Edition" for shooting his mouth off is a little like firing Cher for violating a dress code. Mr. Koch's sin, after months of predictable prickliness, was to ask how Harlem Representative Charles Rangel could claim no taint of racism when he'd actively campaigned for Representative Gus Savage of Illinois—a man with a well-documented record of anti-Semitic remarks. Ed Koch now joins Jimmy the Greek and Andy Rooney as an unlikely martyr to political correctness, except that Mr. Koch's "gaffe" came in the course of attacking prejudice, not promoting it. No doubt this won't much affect Koch's career, but it's another fad blow to the beleaguered cause of brazen journalism. Then again, maybe McLaughlin has a vacancy.

WAGNER XL AND SMALL:

"Helmut Kohl likes few words as much as 'fatherland.' When he speaks of the *Vaterland*, the deep, almost Wagnerian sounds resonate through his not inconsiderable frame. . . ."

—Sir Ralf Dahrendorf, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*, quoted in the October 1990 issue of *Harper's*

"[Shamir] is a man of few words and short, simple sentences, and when he speaks of the land, the homeland, in his grinding bass voice, the deep, almost Wagnerian sounds resonate through his small frame."

—Amos Elon in *The New Yorker*, December 24, 1990

(thanks to John B. Stephens, Burke, Virginia)

BOYCOTT NEWS: *Time* and *Newsweek* have announced the cancellation of their "ex-Israel" editions. As discussed in these pages ("Special Edi-

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tions" by Jacob Weisberg, October 8, 1990), these advertising editions existed primarily to serve Japanese companies that avoid business with Israel because of the Arab boycott. According to the *Detroit Jewish News*, *Time* says it is ending its ex-Israel edition to avoid "possible misunderstanding." *Newsweek* says it is canceling its own edition because "there was no commercial demand." When we last checked, *Newsweek* was selling nearly $1 million worth of ex-Israel advertising a year. But never mind.

ENLISTED: Joining us this week as one of our contributing editors is Eliot A. Cohen, the military analyst who most recently wrote in these pages in favor of an air strategy in Kuwait. Mr. Cohen is a professor at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. He's worked in the Pentagon, at the Naval War College, and at Harvard University, and is the author of many books and articles on war and peace. He'll be writing for us about both, during both, in the months to come.

POETRY CORNER: Lloyd Schwartz's poem "Leaves" (TNR, November 5, 1990) has been chosen by Mark Strand for inclusion in *The Best American Poetry 1991*, to be published by Scribners in the fall.

CORRECTION: In his article on Bill Bradley ("Bill Folds," January 28), John B. Judis wrote that an Eagleton Institute poll had found that a plurality of New Jersey voters thought Bradley's opponent, Christine Whitman, won their first debate. In fact, the poll found that more Whitman supporters than Bradley supporters watched the debate. Apologies to Eagleton and the candidates. ●

JERUSALEM POSTCARD

BATTLE SCARS

By Walter Laqueur

Revisiting Jerusalem in the midst of the current war, it is hard not to be reminded of the atmosphere of 1948. Only a few people are seen in the streets of the Old City, a self-imposed curfew. The old Commercial Center opposite Jaffa Gate where the Jewish shops were set on fire and all the trouble started on December 2, 1947, has at long last been razed, but new development has not started. Notre Dame, the Russian Compound, and Jaffa Road have hardly changed at all. Ben Yehuda Street, which lay in ruins on February 23, 1948, following a terrorist attack by British deserters (forty-nine killed, 140 injured), is now Jerusalem's one and only pedestrian zone. The artists, fewer now, remind one of Moscow's Arbat, except that in Jerusalem the musical performers predominate.

Next station, Kadima House. Once this was my home, and before that, the building where UNSCOP, the U.N. committee that recommended the partition of Palestine, was housed in 1947. The birds on the trees surrounding it still perform their deafening concerto between five and six in the afternoon. This habit has outlasted many old-timers, my neighbors, who defended the building, which was located at the time in no man's land. A friend living in the north told me the evening before that swarms of migratory birds, storks, cormorants, all kinds of water fowl, had just arrived in Lake Hule and the Tiberias area. Welcome guests, but the fish ponds of the kibbutzim had to be quickly covered.

Later in the afternoon I passed a line for gas masks that was quite short and joined it. The army people in charge of distribution were astonishingly polite. Did I really understand how to put it on? Was I aware that no injection should be made unless at least two of the unmistakable symptoms of poisoning appeared? They had instruction manuals and video films in Amharic, Russian, Persian, English, and other languages. Did I want any of this material? I told them that gas masks had been distributed in Haifa in 1940 after Italy had entered the war, but I am not sure they believed me.

I first heard about gas warfare from my father and men of his generation who had witnessed it in World War I. He spoke about it with great horror, and I read about it in Roger Martin du Gard's novel *The Thibauds*, where the slow death of Antoine, a doctor and a victim of a gas attack, is described in intolerably gruesome clinical detail. I had not thought that I would ever wear a gas mask. Gas masks had not been used, after all, in the Second World War—at least not as a part of warfare.

Present-day gas masks, ugly as they are, present a tremendous advance over the clumsy contraptions developed in World War I. At that time soldiers had to carry with them a canister containing charcoal, which filtered the poison gas. A nose-clip prevented breathing through the nostrils. Today there are no nose-clips, no canisters, and the filters are light and can be screwed on easily. All citizens, young and old, have been asked to carry with them the masks, packed in brown cardboard boxes. They are the omnipresent symbols of the war of 1991.

As in wartime London, the waiting in sealed rooms and air raid shelters produces folklore on the adult and juvenile level alike. So far the songs that have

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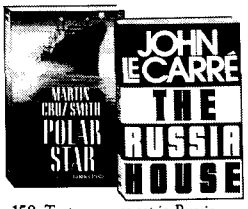

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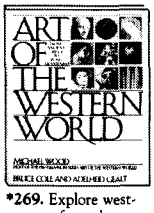

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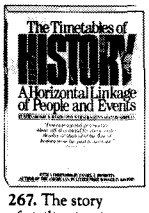

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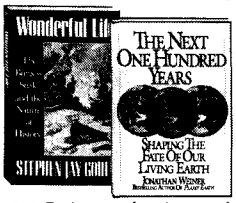

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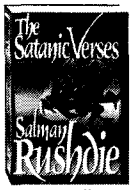

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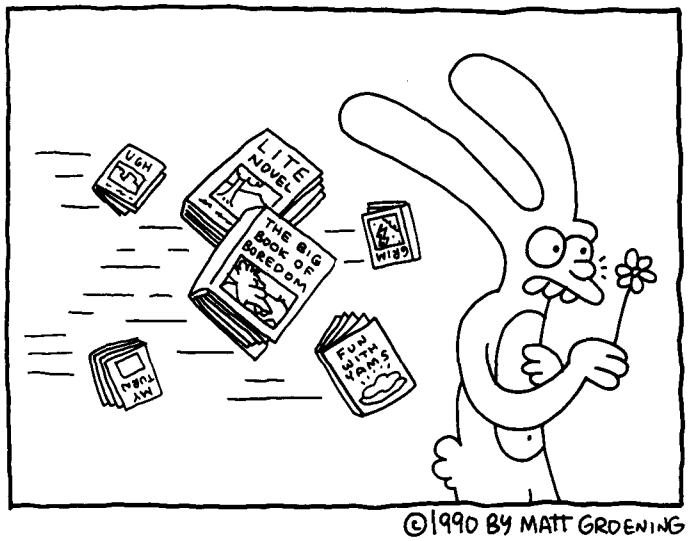

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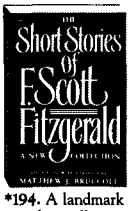

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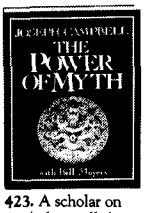

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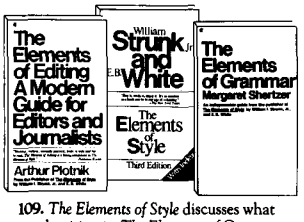
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emerged ("Saddam Ha'metumtambum, Bum, Bum") don't approximate those making the rounds in London in 1940. The radio incessantly plays a hit song of 1952, "Sugar Bush I Love You So," presumably an expression of gratitude to the president of the United States. A Baghdadi Jew repeatedly interviewed on radio claims to have been a classmate of Saddam, whom he describes as lazy and not too bright except for his interest in Arab language and literature. The authenticity of the story is doubted by other Iraqi Jews.

Close to a thousand journalists have arrived, and hotel owners and taxi drivers are overjoyed. The local radio and television people are doing an excellent job; never before has there been so much information available within seconds. They digest it quickly, and intelligently.

How different it was during the siege of 1948, when a handful of newspapermen, local and foreign, without telephones, telegraph, wireless, totally cut off from the outside world for three months, tried to do their work. A few tried carrier pigeons to get their stories through; two attempted to cross the mountains by night (one was killed, the other intercepted by soldiers and sent back). I wrote a long daily dispatch and passed copies to all kinds of people who claimed to have a secret connection with the outside world. I was certain that none of these dispatches ever reached their destination. But a few months ago, working on an autobiographical study, I found that many had in fact gone through and were published. I am reading them now for the first time—an "open letter to General Marshall," some front-line reporting, some mood pieces—not great journalism, but of considerable help recapturing the atmosphere of besieged Jerusalem.

In 1948 the shops were empty (except for cough drops called Penetro), and the food and water rations were exceedingly small by any standard. Yet there was a euphoria in the air, and I never felt hunger or thirst. The weapons used by attackers and defenders alike were ridiculously ineffective by 1991 standards—old rifles, light machine guns, a few two-inch mortars. The Arab Legion had a few cannon. Yet the number of victims was higher than in any subsequent war. On January 18, 1948, a whole squad sent on a rescue mission to Kfar Etzion disappeared without a trace. In the small Jerusalem of 1948 virtually everyone had a relation or a friend among the "35," as they came to be called. It took a long time to establish where the ambush had taken place. Today, by means of a single helicopter, help could have been provided within minutes.

Our "press center" was a single room in lower Ben Yehuda Street. At noon every day Gershon Hirsh, who later became known as Gershon Avner and was the first spokesman of a government that did not yet exist, gave a short press conference. It was a purely academic exercise, for there was no way to make use of the information. Born in Germany, Gershon went to school in Haifa and attended Oxford, where he was president of the Union. A highly intelligent man and one of the most lively I have known, he became one of the leading Israeli diplomats of his generation and, still later, president of Haifa University. I was to meet him again on January 19 to exchange reminiscences about the old days. He phoned to say his daughter had arrived with her baby, and could we meet the following morning in my apartment? When he did not turn up I called him. He had died during the night.

The following night the sirens surprised us when we were parking the car in the street. We did not hurry, nor did anyone else. Nothing much happened during the earlier air raids; nothing will happen this time. The slogan of 1940, "London can take it," applies to Israel in 1991. There is, of course, much less bombing now, but the danger of gas warfare still exists. The Israeli public was quite unprepared for the kind of enemy it faces now. In 1948 the Arab Legion acted according to a code of honor and even chivalry, which would have seemed strange and ridiculous to the likes of Saddam Hussein.

WALTER LAQUEUR is writing a book on the siege of Jerusalem in 1948, which he covered as a correspondent.

Behind the 'New World Order.'

THE FINE PRINT

By Morton Kondracke

More than a week after Secretary of State James Baker's surprise agreement with Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh on Gulf war aims and subsequent Middle East peace, Bush administration colleagues were still raining verbal artillery on Baker. "Total, unabashed free-lancing," one official called it. "Very upsetting to our allies," said another. White House officials are willing to believe that Baker was simply outfoxed by Bessmertnykh, who grandly read the communiqué to the Washington press instead of saving it for Soviet consumption. But they were peeved by a State Department leak to *The Washington Post* that implied that State, and not the National Security Council, was in charge of postwar diplomatic

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planning. And national security adviser Brent Scowcroft was angered that Baker claimed to have told a White House aide that the communiqué was coming, when he hadn't. Not only was Scowcroft blindsided by the communiqué; he felt he had been lied to.

This inside jostling likely will end soon, but it does seem to have long-term meaning. Bush's "New World Order"—and especially the Middle East aspect—are going to be Bush initiatives, not Baker Plans. And the "NWO," as it is inevitably being dubbed, is likely to veer closer to Pax Americana than to Pax-Americana-Sovietica.

Nothing about the NWO is entirely clear, of course, because it's still more slogan than strategy. The administration says it means good things: promotion of democracy, collective security, arms reductions, settlement of regional disputes, cooperation among industrialized nations, and free trade. But many Americans fear it means that this country will be the world's policeman, and many foreigners see it as a post-cold-war American grab for hegemony. The NWO seemingly anticipates that other countries will help pay for U.S. foreign policy initiatives, but what will those countries get in return? And if they don't pay up—as many assert Japan and Germany aren't paying now—what will be the consequences? And just how does the Soviet Union fit into Bush's new world?

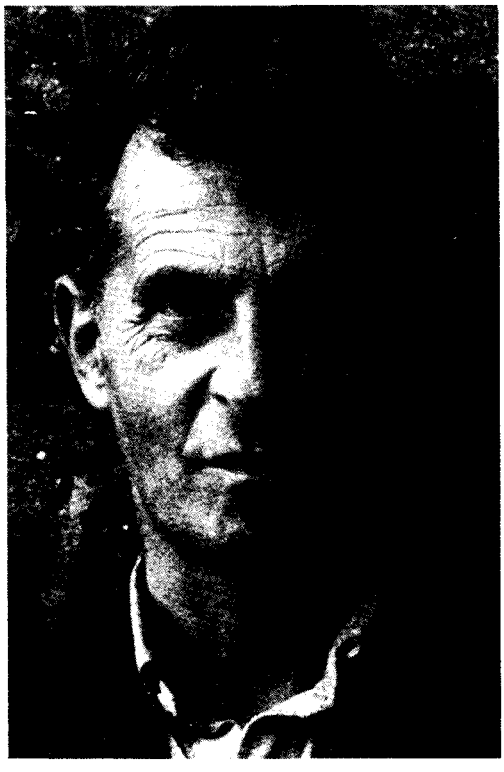
The first big test of what the NWO means will come in deciding how to end the war. The next will be in the attempt to bring peace and stability to the Middle East. The Soviets, the French, and the U.N. secretary general seem willing to settle the war diplomatically, but Bush wants a full Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait—plus, apparently, continued sanctions, arms embargoes, reparations, and war crimes trials if Saddam remains in power.

"In the aftermath of the crisis in the Persian Gulf," said the Baker-Bessmertnykh communiqué, "mutual U.S.-Soviet efforts to promote Arab-Israeli peace and regional stability, in consultation with other parties in the region, will be greatly facilitated and enhanced." Some Middle East experts took this to mean that Baker had in mind a U.S.-Soviet-led postwar peace process, without European participation, without the United Nations, and without the international peace conference that the Soviets (and most Arabs) have always called for.

But high and low, administration officials say that although Great Britain and France, as participants in the Gulf war, cannot be excluded from the peace process, the United States clearly wants them as junior partners. Bush aides are looking for ways to bypass a big international conference and a powerful United Nations role in the peace. "We are not talking about a Congress of Vienna for the Middle East," one official said, referring to the 1814 meeting that shaped Europe after Napoleon's defeat.

White House officials make it clear—echoing Bush

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN: THE DUTY OF GENIUS
A BIOGRAPHY BY RAY MONK



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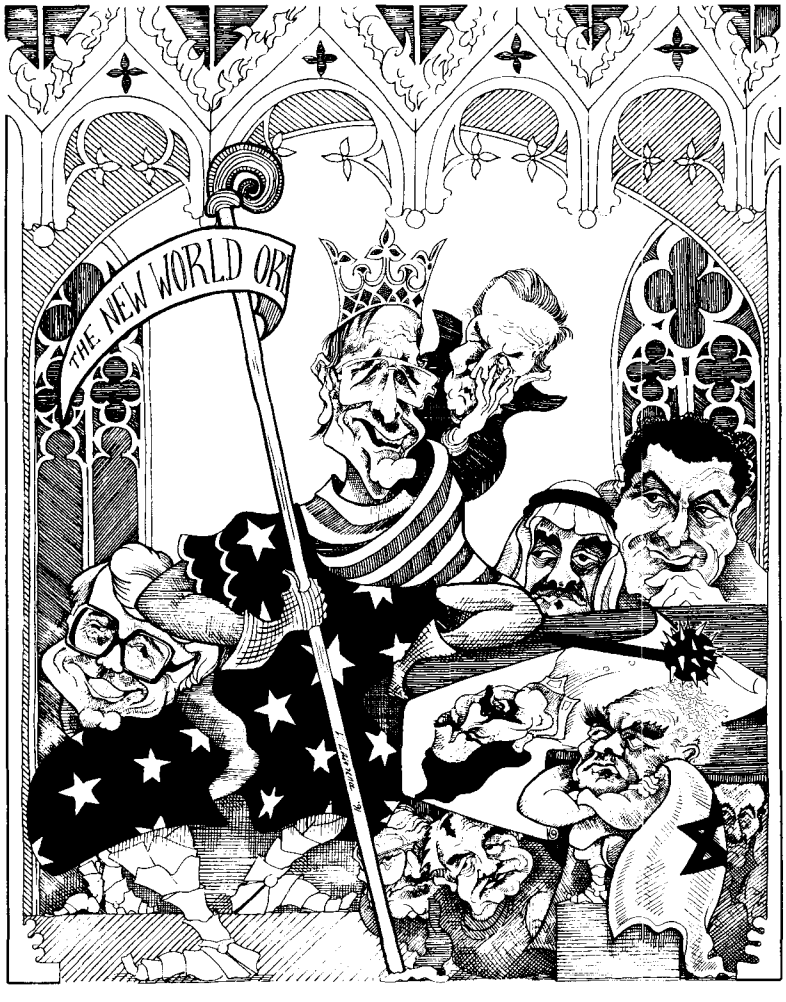
in his State of the Union address—that the basic job of putting together a new Middle East (and a New World Order) is the United States' responsibility. The Soviet Union is being *offered* a role, they say, if it behaves responsibly in other contexts, including the Baltics. The president and his top aides all fervently hope that Mikhail Gorbachev will continue to be a foreign policy asset. At the same time, one State Department official said, Gorbachev is "at a precipice," as are hopes for a close, cooperative U.S.-Soviet relationship.

Bush aides now judge Gorbachev to be a "total tactician" who moves right and left according to pressures placed upon him, and they blame Soviet democratic liberals for allowing Leninists, right-wing Russian nationalists, the military, and the KGB to swing him away from glasnost and perestroika. Some visiting Soviet democrats share this view and want American financial support for a counteroffensive, but the administration does not seem willing to risk alienating Gorbachev by interfering.

Rather than a full partner in the New World Order and in Mideast diplomacy, the chances are that the Soviet Union will be, at best, "cover" to convince Europeans and non-aligned countries to go along with U.S. policy initiatives. Bush needs a back-up plan for both the NWO and the Mideast in case the Soviet Union can't or won't play this role—if Gorbachev becomes an embarrassing despot, for instance, or if Soviet foreign policy turns hostile to the United States again.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The administration is currently planning that once an NSC-led interagency panel concludes its strategy review this month, ideas will get tried out on Israel and Arab allies. Then something like a Bush Plan for the region will be set in motion. Officials say that the United States wants to act fast, before other players have a chance to formulate alternate proposals that may not be as congenial to American interests.

There are three categories for administration Mideast planning: the political (including Arab-Israeli), economic, and security (including military and arms control subcategories). Not very many concrete decisions have been made yet, but highest-ranking administration officials seem firmly committed to leaving few, if any, U.S. ground forces in the Gulf after the war is over. The Pentagon, the Saudis, and the Kuwaiti government in exile all think that the region could absorb a small permanent force of 15,000 to 40,000 Americans, but White House officials say that their first choice is for Arab forces (presumably Saudi and Egyptian) to provide security for the Gulf. The second choice is a U.N. force, and "the worst possible" is a U.S. force. Instead, the United States would preposition equipment and make a fast return, if necessary.

Officials say there may be major opportunities for Arab-Israeli peacemaking after an allied victory. "The region will be all shaken up," one top Bush adviser said. "The PLO will be discredited as an organization. A feeling of closeness will have developed between the Saudis and the Egyptians, and maybe the Syrians. We see increasing self-confidence among our Arab friends, similar to what Anwar Sadat showed after his 1973 war." Obviously this official thinks the Saudis, like Sadat, might be ready to recognize and negotiate with Israel.

Bush aides confirm that the Gulf war—and Israel's willing ness to stay out of it—have drastically improved relations between Bush and the Likud government in Jerusalem. "In war you do find out who you can depend on when the chips are down," said one sometime critic of the Israelis. The United States still wants Israel to be accommodating toward the Palestinians, this official said, but also wants the Palestinians to understand that the United States will not "deliver" a settlement for them and that they'll have to negotiate it with Israel. The American postwar package presumably will include financial inducements from Saudi Arabia to the Arabs and from the United States to Israel to encourage agreements. This scenario assumes that the war will have dampened ha-

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treds in the region, but the opposite may be the case.

The NWO and its Mideast component all depend, of course, on a reasonably quick allied victory in the Gulf—and upon the continued willingness and ability of the American people to shoulder international burdens. Administration officials acknowledge that some problems loom, including deep unhappiness in Congress with Germany and Japan, and the weakness of the American domestic economy. George Bush obviously wants to build a New World Order the way the Truman and Eisenhower administrations did after World War II, but he's got to watch out that the country doesn't turn isolationist and treat his dreams as it did Woodrow Wilson's after World War I. ●

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

BRAVE NEW GIMMICK

By Fred Barnes

On a lazy morning last August, President Bush and Brent Scowcroft, his national security adviser, went fishing near Bush's summer home in Kennebunkport, Maine. For four hours they lollygagged on Bush's speedboat, Fidelity. It was a windless day and the fish weren't biting. So Bush and Scowcroft talked and talked, reviewing everything that had happened since Bush became president—the fall of communism, the crumbling of the Soviet empire, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. They agreed the old arrangement in the world, built around the East-West struggle, was gone. New rules of conduct among nations were being created. And the United States should do much of the creating, particularly by making the Persian Gulf crisis a test case. If all went well, if Saddam Hussein were thwarted, a "new world order" might emerge.

The phrase was Scowcroft's, and it wasn't entirely new. For a year or so he, Bush, and others had tossed the phrase around in private conversations. Its meaning was imprecise. Whatever cropped up post-cold war, that was the new world order. Bush even used the phrase in a speech months before the Iraqi invasion. At a Republican fund-raiser in San Francisco last February, he said, "Time and again in this century, the political map of the world was transformed. And in each instance, a new world order came about through the advent of a new tyrant or the outbreak of a bloody global war, or its end. Now the world has undergone another upheaval, but this time, there's no war."

Saddam changed that on August 2. The invasion produced the second part of Bush's vision of a new world order: collective security against unprovoked aggression. (The first part is the absence of a U.S.-Soviet superpower rivalry.) By the time Bush and Scowcroft got together to fish, American troops had already been dispatched to the Persian Gulf. As they talked, Bush and Scowcroft concluded that complete success against Saddam was a necessary prerequisite for a new world order. Iraq's aggression was, as a White House official put it, "more than just another little example." It was the ballgame. "If we play this right and it works, we'll have a leg up the next time," the official said. In other words, reversing Saddam's invasion would be a deterrent to other potential aggressors.

Soon Bush was touting collective security, describing it as nearly synonymous with the new world order. Since the anti-Saddam alliance operates under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council, Bush declared on October 30 that the U.N. "can help bring about a new day . . . a new world order and a long era of peace." On November 17 in Prague, Bush said the Gulf crisis offers "an historic opportunity: the opportunity to draw upon the great and growing strength of the commonwealth of freedom and forge for all nations a new world order far more stable and secure than any we have known." In his State of the Union address on January 29, Bush sounded Wilsonian about the "long-held promise of a new world order." He came close to calling the fight against Saddam a war to end all wars. "All of us yearn for a world where we will never have to fight again," he said.

There's a third part to the new world order that Bush touches on only occasionally. For years to come, the collective security he envisions won't really be collective. It will be unilateral American action with a multilateral cover. Bush acknowledged as much on February 1 while speaking in Georgia to troops and to families of soldiers in Saudi Arabia: "When we win, and we will, we will have taught a dangerous dictator, and any tyrant tempted to follow in his footsteps, that the U.S. has a new credibility and that what we say goes, and that there is no place for lawless aggression in the Persian Gulf and in this new world order that we seek to create. . . . And we mean it."

At the White House the phrase "new world order" has all but become holy writ. Speechwriters now routinely include it in every military or foreign policy speech by the president. But Scowcroft has tired of the phrase. Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater thinks a new moniker will come along to replace it. Other aides fret over its similarity to Adolf Hitler's call for a "new order." Or they fear it sounds too fuzzy-minded and one-worldish. Bush doesn't worry. He cited the new world order twice in the State of the Union and in three speeches at military installations on February 1. Not only that, but he's added a moral argument to buttress it.

The first White House aides heard of the moral case was on January 2 when Bush appeared at the 7:30 a.m. senior staff meeting. Bush rarely attends this meeting, but he'd just returned from ten days at Camp David and had something to say. "I've had a lot of time to think about the situation in the Middle East," he said.

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"I've reconciled all the moral issues. It's black versus white, good versus evil." Bush said he intended to defeat Saddam no matter what. "I don't care if not one congressman supports me," he said.

Bush, it turned out, had debated the morality of war against Saddam with the Rev. Edmund Browning, the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church. As an Episcopalian, Bush feels obliged to meet with Browning, though the sessions consist chiefly of the bishop's criticism of Bush's policies. He's consulted Browning three times, once on December 20, just after the bishop returned from the Middle East. Browning told Bush that he should rule out war. Bush refused. "I hate to have my bishop in opposition to me," Bush said.

He's put Browning's opposition to good use. On January 11 at a private White House breakfast for 120 House members, Bush recounted his debate with Browning on the morality of war. He repeated the story on January 25 for members of the Republican National Committee. Both times, "You could have heard a pin drop," a White House official said. In their debate, Bush urged Browning to read the Amnesty International report on Iraqi atrocities in Kuwait. "Then you tell me whether it's right or wrong to use force to stop the cruelty, literally the rape and the pillage and the plunder of Kuwait that's going on now. . . . Now, Bishop, tell me, what is the moral judgment up there on whether we should use force to stop that or not?"

Bush told the RNC that he asked Browning a second question. "Tell me where the National Council of Churches were in 1939 when the Nazis went into Poland and the death regiments followed and did exactly to Poland on a bigger scale what is happening in Kuwait today? And what would that have meant in a moral sense if we had used force in 1939? If we had saved 2 million Jews from their fate in the gas chambers by using force, would it have been moral or would it have been immoral? If we had saved 500,000 Polish patriots from being lined up against empty graves and then shot until the bodies filled the graves. Would it have been moral or immoral for a United States that opposed in 1939 entry into the war by 93 percent of the American people?" Bush didn't give Browning's reply. At a press conference the day after meeting with Bush, Browning said responding to violence with more violence "will do no good."

The bishop's name came up again on January 30 when Bush met with members of the Committee for Peace and Security in the Gulf, a group supporting his anti-Saddam policy. Bush said he has no rancor against anti-war demonstrators. "My own bishop disagrees with me on this," he said. After guiding a tour of White House bedrooms, Bush munched on buttered popcorn with committee members. To his surprise, the war hadn't caused "political complications," he said. A committee member suggested that's because his enemy is so evil. Bush's eyes kindled. "That's it, isn't it?" he said. "That's the heart of the matter." ●

The mob hits the skids.

GODFATHER III½

By John Brodie

The Godfather, Part III may have done well at the box office, but the Mafia's in trouble. As a recent *New York Times* headline announced, "BATTERED AND BADLY BRUISED: Mafia is Losing Grip on America," the successors to the original Don Corleone aren't doing so well. The *Times* story listed the standard reasons for the mob's decline—an aging leadership, RICO-empowered prosecutors, competition from Colombians. But it barely took measure of how far the gangsters have fallen.

Take the case of Venero "Benny Eggs" Mangano. As the underboss of the Genovese family, the second most powerful of the five families of New York, Mangano assists Vincent "the Chin" Gigante in running a $27 billion criminal enterprise that controls parts of the New York trucking, construction, shipping, and entertainment industries, and whose activities include gambling and loansharking. According to his federal tax returns, on which Mangano describes himself as a self-employed businessman who deals in what the returns call "soft goods," his labors earn him slightly more than $100,000 a year. And yet, for all his apparent power and presumed fearsomeness, Mangano has proved no match for Martin V. Herzog, an up-by-the-bootstraps Greenwich Village real estate investor who holds the lease on the flyspecked social club at 101 Thompson Street that for years served as Mangano's de facto office.

Set amid the boutiques that over the last decade or so have replaced Mary's Candy Store and the Barbato family's pork shop, the club, like all such clubs, doesn't look like much: a few tables, a bar, a pay phone, a picture of the Virgin Mary, a poster for the Knights of Columbus, a Mets pennant, a photo of Dean Martin with one of the priests from St. Andrew's Church around the corner. However, according to the FBI, the club served as a waiting room for those who had business with Mangano's boss, Gigante, whose own Triangle Social Club at 208 Sullivan Street was just a stroll away.

In 1985 the club's lease came into the hands of Herzog, who has lived in the Village since the early 1950s and has made his living by managing and investing in property, mainly six-story residential walk-ups in the neighborhood. To the impartial observer, any landlord who attempts to evict racketeers with Italian surnames has to be either extraordinarily avaricious or just plain crazy; Herzog may be a bit of both. (Herzog's approach to real estate, after all, has captured the attention of the New York state attorney general's office, which in 1989 permanently enjoined him

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from converting rental apartment buildings into co-ops, having discovered that Herzog warehoused apartments and then lied about it.)

After Herzog took over the lease, money orders in the amount of $250 began arriving at his office every month. The orders bore no address and no signature other than "The Club." Herzog, not a naif, knew to which account to credit payment. Before long, Mangano stopped his landlord on the street and told him, amiably enough, that he could expect to get a higher rent sometime soon. Time passed, and no increase was forthcoming. After a year went by, Herzog stopped by the club and proposed an increase that would, he claimed, merely cover the cost of heating and lighting the space. This time, according to Herzog, Mangano said, "Go fuck yourself."

"I was kind of offended, because I speak to people properly," Herzog says. And he was surprised, because he thought he had a good relationship with his Mafioso tenants. He says he attended the wake for Mangano's mother, and he describes his relationship with Gigante, whom he calls "The CEO," as "polite." "[Vincent] has always wished me a good year, both for Rosh Hashana and secular New Year. And his mother happens to be a real lady." But as no one knows better than Gigante and Mangano, business is business, and so early last summer Herzog had his attorney send a termination notice to The Club.

Herzog was not, as they say, whacked. Instead, the club's attorney, Joseph Filippone, took the case to the New York City Housing Authority's Tenant and Landlord Court, where he managed to stave off eviction for a few months. None of the wise guys attended the proceedings. Instead, some neighborhood old-timers who also use the club appeared and sat forlornly by.

When the stay of execution ran out, the members tried another approach. Acting on behalf of the membership, the Barbato brothers, two strapping associates of Mangano's whose mother had once operated the block's sausage shop, attempted to enlist the aid of the co-op board of 101 Thompson Street. (As part of his conversion of the building to co-ops, Herzog sold the apartments but maintained a ninety-nine-year sweetheart lease for the building's two storefronts—a Chinese laundry and Mangano's club—paying the board a monthly rent of $750 apiece.) The Barbatos promised the residents of the building that the club was now clean and that "Benny Eggs" Mangano was out of the picture.

The president of the co-op, Alfred Milanese, who sells pretzels at Union Square, says the co-op's board was interested in preserving the club as a way of maintaining a sense of neighborhood. He was apparently unaware that anything illegal might have been going on. Milanese could be excused for not knowing that, according to a confidential FBI document, " 'Benny Eggs' Mangano and 'Johnny Sausage' Barbato are the bookkeepers in charge of monitoring the percentage of all gambling and loan-sharking proceeds that are due to Gigante. . . . Mangano operates from a social club at 101 Thompson Street." Nor would Milanese necessarily know that John "Johnny Sausage" Barbato is identified in *United States* v. *DiGilio* as "a Genovese Family soldier" and that he is a convicted racketeer.

Whether or not the co-op board was aware of its resident racketeers' lines of business, it happily devised a plan to save the club. Herzog had hopes of finding a new tenant who'd pay the approximately $3,000 a month the laundromat was earning him. Instead, the compromise-minded board proposed lowering the rent they charged Herzog to $500 a month, hoping that the mobsters might come up with a little money and that Herzog might temper his appetite. The board also proposed that each apartment owner cough up $5 apiece per month so that the club might continue as the locus of community life and as a deterrent to crime, since neighborhoods with this sort of club are supposedly very safe. One co-op board member, a gay-rights activist, described the proposed deal pragmatically: "The image and perception of the club tends to keep things cool. Of course, it was probably safe to live around the Reichstag, too."

This unlikely alliance of new and old SoHo scheduled a meeting with Herzog last fall. The landlord sent his lawyer, saying, "I don't talk to errand boys." He would have been willing to meet with Gigante—"I talk one CEO to another CEO"—but that did not happen, and the sitdown went poorly. Herzog would not back off his demand for a rent of $3,000 a month, and the meeting ended with the Barbato brothers evoking the muscular old days by suggesting that Herzog's attorney should advise his client that he will "never rent the fuckin' space." On October 25 the club was padlocked. Soon after the meeting, Herzog showed the club to a prospective tenant. The Barbatos stood outside and offered the following bit of advice: "Don't rent this fuckin' space."

Over the following weeks, the storefront suffered broken windows and a jimmied padlock, and Herzog's answering machine was clogged with obscene phone calls. Meanwhile, the members tried to raise some public sympathy, distributing a flier that said, in a childish scrawl, "Mr. Herzog promised—GAVE HIS WORD—that we could stay here as long as he controlled our lease. NOW HE'S EVICTED US!"

Meanwhile, the real powers in the Genovese family, who must have lost interest in 101 Thompson some time ago, have bigger problems to worry about. Mangano and Gigante have been preparing to stand trial in a massive construction-bid-rigging case and are both under house arrest. Their calls are monitored and their visitors watched. After waiting patiently for nearly five years, Herzog chose to kick out his mobsters at a time when they had their hands tied. "The only thing that Martin Herzog ever respected" about the club, one longtime resident of the building says, "was the fact that it was organized crime. He obviously waited until everything was clear for him to act."

And so the shell of Venero Mangano's office remains boarded and empty as the wise guys and the old men who frequented the club wander the block aimlessly, saddened by the failure of their activist tactics and their landlord's inability to understand that in some old-world circles, a man's word is his bond.

JOHN BRODIE is a New York writer.

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The anti-war movement's dead end.

MEANS OF DISSENT

By Jacob Weisberg

Opposition to American involvement in Vietnam grew slowly, over a period of years. This time around a ready-made anti-war protest movement sprang up almost overnight. In the first few days of Operation Desert Storm, protesters turned out in force in New York, Washington, Chicago, Seattle, and many smaller cities. In San Francisco, where 1,700 people have been arrested for acts of civil disobedience, 50,000 attended a rally on January 26. One hundred thousand people marched from the U.S. Capitol to the White House the same day. Demonstrations against the war in Indochina did not draw such massive crowds until 1967, three years after the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. One has the sense of history being replayed as a game of speed chess.

In his State of the Union address, President Bush was careful to acknowledge the legitimacy of the protests. "Democracy brings the undeniable value of thoughtful dissent," he noted, in obvious contrast to LBJ, who accused demonstrators of trying to undermine the war effort. The protesters have learned a few lessons too. Few among their ranks have exhibited for Saddam Hussein and his Republican Guard any of the sympathy once extended to Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnamese National Liberation Front. They don't demonize American troops or make common cause with the enemy. In contrast to the climate of provocation that characterized anti-war rallies in the 1960s, anti-Gulf demonstrations have been peaceful and well-ordered, with police assisting in choreographed mass arrests.

In a larger sense, however, the public anti-war forces do not seem to have advanced. They remain emotionally and intellectually stuck in a '60s rut. What has been striking about the protest movement to date is the extent to which its arguments, slogans, sources of support, and techniques—even its style and sensibility—are dominated by memories of the Vietnam era. "The general problem is that it's attempting to squeeze the complex reality of the '90s Mideast into the more simple realities of the '60s and Vietnam," says Michael Lerner, a veteran of the New Left and editor of *Tikkun*, who has attended rallies in the Bay area. "In many ways it's '60s nostalgia at its worst."

Many of those attending the events on successive Saturdays in Washington seemed to think they *were* Vietnam rallies. Except for "Draft Dan Quayle" and a few other clever messages, the banners were twenty years out of date. Some of the "Bring the Troops Home" signs looked like mildewed relics from old rallies. One man carried a poster that read, "Impeach Henry Kissinger." A cluster of high school boys chanted, "Hell No, We Won't Go!"

The revival element was strong on both days. Buffalo Bill jackets, tie-dye, and various hippie tropes are making a comeback. To warm up the crowd at the first rally, on January 19, the organizers played John Lennon's "Imagine" and "Revolution" over the public address system, along with the unofficial theme song of the new movement: Julian Lennon's version of his father's "Give Peace a Chance." A bearded hippie strummed the same anthems at the far perimeter of the park. The second rally, on January 26, began with the Doors' "Unknown Soldier," and concluded with Peter Yarrow—in person—singing "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?"

Most of those attending the first rally were too young to remember the Siege of the Pentagon but seemed eager to participate in a full-dress re-enactment. The overall impression was of kids acting out the real-life roles played by their older siblings—not in the war, of course, but in the anti-war. Most probably knew the scene best from TV and movies, which may have contributed to the air of inauthenticity. Many legendary elements seemed to be missing, most notably sex and drugs. The only controlled-substance users present were members of a sect that advocates the use of hemp as an alternative energy source. With a few other exceptions, humor was absent.

The action onstage was less countercultural in style, but much more radical in substance. The rally was sponsored by the National Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East, a front for the Workers World Party, a Trotskyist splinter group distinguished from other left sectarians by its support for the massacre in Tiananmen Square. The coalition, led by the increasingly bizarre Ramsey Clark, stressed its "grass-roots" efforts at organizing diverse peoples. This was reflected in the presence of groups like the Hands Off Cuba Committee, Young Koreans United, and a hodgepodge of others dubbed "bonkerists" by the left-wing journalist Alexander Cockburn.

Like most such affairs, the rally was a good forum for these factions to air their familiar, often unrelated grievances. A succession of Native Americans, African Americans, Palestinians, Haitians, Hispanics, and Panamanians came to the podium to denounce U.S. imperialism from Central America to the Middle East. One of the first speakers was one Dacajeweah of the American Indian Movement, who asserted that the entire history of the United States was one of racism and oppression, and who insisted that the American aggressor withdraw not just from Saudi Arabia and Panama but from Arizona as well. He was followed by a woman representing the formerly striking Pittston coal miners who led a chant: "U.S. out of Arab lands / We would rather fight the Klan." Mwalimu Keita of the All African People's Revolutionary Party denounced the "illegal state of Israel," and shouted, "Down with Zionism." All this alienated many who came to check out the scene without knowing who the backers were. I bumped into one college friend who told me he had mixed feelings about the war and came to hear what people were saying. When he heard, he was appalled.

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A more mainstream event was promised for the following Saturday. Unlike the Coalition, the National Campaign for Peace in the Middle East, which organized the march on January 26, supports U.N. sanctions and is willing to criticize Saddam. A congressman attended: Charles Rangel of New York. Beyond that, however, there wasn't much moderation in evidence. Among the many sponsors were the Communist Party U.S.A., the Nicaraguan Solidarity Network of Greater New York, and the Coalition to Liberate Animals Worldwide. The emcee was Angela Sanbrono of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, who raged against U.S. aid to the "death squad government." The overall message coming from the stage was not much more sophisticated than the previous week. "No Blood for Oil," "No War in the Middle East," and "Bring the Troops Home" were the official slogans.

As for the crowd, it was older, calmer, and whiter. According to a poll taken by *The Washington Post*, a third were veterans of Vietnam protests; perhaps for that reason they were less intent on proving their radical credentials. More waved flags than wore them. Churches, union affiliates, and military families were well represented, along with groups like SANE/Freeze, Greenpeace, and the Rainbow Coalition (Jesse Jackson materialized at both rallies). The *Post* poll found that more than half of those attending were pacifists who oppose not just America's involvement in the Gulf, but all war. This is a worthy stand, but it is not likely to attract many new adherents. Indeed, only 11 percent of those who answered a recent *Wall Street Journal*-NBC poll said they had gained respect for anti-war protests, as opposed to 60 percent who said they had lost respect.

Participants in both rallies told me their cause would win broad support when "body bags" brought the war home to the nation. This remains a possibility, but the assumption that America cannot accept casualties is naive, and again based on a facile application of the Vietnam analogy. For the protests to win a wider following, they need to do more than wait for the costs to mount. They need to move beyond a moral message based on the unacceptability of the use of force to a prudential argument about alternative objectives and strategies. Of course, there are plenty of people who oppose the war—in Congress and elsewhere—who are doing exactly this. But so far they haven't had much to do with the organized protest activities that attract media attention.

If the movement wants this mainstream support, it needs to demonstrate that although there are causes for which Americans should fight, the Gulf war doesn't meet the test. The rallies to date suggest that they have no such test. "Our policy meets every one of the criteria these people have urged on us," says George Weigel of the neoconservative Ethics and Public Policy Center. "It's a just cause, defending Arabs, under the authority of the United Nations, an act of collective security against a guy condemned by Amnesty International who kills cormorants. And they're still against it." They'll remain against it as long as they look at all American intervention through the lens of Vietnam. ●

The Army's fatal war strategy.

GROUND NUTS

By Edward N. Luttwak

Many are now persuaded that Saddam Hussein is mad as well as bad, yet his strategy has been perfectly coherent. It is American strategy that contains a huge contradiction that may yet be disastrous.

To emulate the successful models before him—Nasser, Sadat and Assad of Syria, all of whom started wars, suffered horrendous defeats, and yet easily remained in power—Saddam need only kill appreciable numbers of Americans and survive physically. So long as he refuses to withdraw from Kuwait voluntarily—even if his troops are forced out in one way or another—he will retain the heroic reputation he has already established by his stalwart resistance to American threats and American firepower, and by his Scud attacks against Israel.

This being the only relevant political context, Saddam's conduct of the war has been very sound. Knowing that his air force was outmatched, he was content to leave it mostly inactive until its shelters were penetrated and destroyed one by one by laser-guided bombs. At that point, the remaining aircraft were sent off to Iran in the hopes that they might one day be recovered—not much of a plan, but better than their assured loss. Knowing that he had no navy to speak of, he did not rely on it either. Finally, Saddam was clearly disabused of any illusions about his ground forces. For all its thousands of tanks, the Iraqi army never could stage fast armored offensives in the Israeli style even against Iran's ragged troops, let alone against opponents with decisively strong air power. It simply lacks the fluid direction that only strong-willed officers up and down the chain of command can provide—the very type of officers who can best stage a coup as well, and therefore the type the regime has been careful to weed out. The same, by the way, goes for the much advertised Republican Guards. Iraq's only real military strength is the *defensive* potential of its ground forces, and Saddam therefore had no choice but to wait patiently until the Americans would attack the dug-in and fortified positions of his troops, shielded by dense mine fields, and covered by artillery firing both high explosive and chemical rounds.

Lacking in any real offensive means, and unable to resist aerial bombardment, Saddam must have watched the vast buildup of American and allied ground forces that preceded the war with satisfaction, for it was only their own advance onto his positions that could remedy his lack of strategic reach. What the Americans believed

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to be a threat to him was in fact his only opportunity.

True, an American ground offensive would certainly outmaneuver and defeat the Iraqi armies in or near Kuwait, killing tens of thousands of Iraqi troops in the process, but Americans would also be killed—and Saddam could prosper politically after the inevitable defeat. After all, it is heresy for Muslims to complain of fathers, husbands, or sons lost in battle against the infidel—that would imply disbelief in the gloriously happy afterlife promised by Islam to all its martyrs. In that particular accounting of war, the deaths of infidels and the deaths of Muslims both register as gains—and the Nasser, Sadat and Assad precedents prove that the religious rule works politically as well.

It may seem that American conduct in the war has been equally coherent. There is no doubt that by waging war only from the air, Iraq's ground strength has been outmaneuvered—so far. But the essence of any air strategy is the selection of targets, and the evidence shows that obsolete command arrangements framed many years ago to cope with a Soviet land invasion—arrangements that President Bush could have changed but did not—have seriously distorted the bombing campaign from the start. In a huge anomaly that has passed strangely unremarked, the United States has been waging an air war under the command of an Army officer, General Norman Schwarzkopf, whose deputy is also an Army officer, and who reports to the president through the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Colin Powell, also an Army officer. Although it would be grossly unfair to accuse these men of any narrow parochialism, let alone a conscious service bias, the Army/Marine domination of war decisions is a fact replete with consequences.

Certainly there has been no adverse effect on the *strategic* bombardment. Early-warning radars, command-and-control centers, major anti-aircraft missile sites, and air bases large and small; chemical- and nuclear- and biological-warfare laboratories and plants; weapons factories and assembly lines; military storage depots and headquarters—all have been attacked systematically, then photographed to assess damage, and then attacked again, and again.

But when it came to dealing with Iraq's army and its occupation of Kuwait, the ground-force bias built into the structure of Schwarzkopf's Central Command has resulted in the bombing of Iraqi troops to facilitate an allied ground offensive, instead of the bombing of Iraqi supplies for those same troops, which would soon make any such offensive superfluous.

In the now notoriously euphoric first announcements, it was claimed that the forces of Iraq's Republican Guards had been "decimated." The briefer meant massacred, not diminished by 10 percent. In any case neither meaning reflected the facts. Nor was it just a word that was being misused here, but air power itself, as it was again and again in the days that followed. In part, the emphasis on the Republican Guards seems to have reflected political science-y theories of its supposed role as the basis of the regime, playing the SS to the reborn Adolf Hitler imagined by President Bush. If so, the U.S. Central Command theorists were sadly mistaken, for Saddam Hussein's rule is by all accounts secured by a 15,000-man palace guard, a vast secret police apparatus, the Baath party militia, and countless informers.

The greater reason for the emphasis on the Republican Guards, however, was that only its forces could seriously resist the Rommel-style offensive of deep penetration that Schwarzkopf's Army planners have desired from the start. Aside from the higher quality of their weapons and men, Republican Guard formations are mostly located at the hinge between Iraq and Kuwait, and thus well placed to resist the envisaged U.S. advance meant to cut off the entire array of Iraqi troops in Kuwait. And since then, of course, regular Iraqi ground forces have also been heavily bombed.

Technically, that is not a smart way of using air power. Ground forces equipped with armored vehicles, or dug-in, or—worse still—with both means of protection are notoriously resilient to bombardment. Iraqi forces, moreover, contain many visually aimed anti-aircraft weapons, which over time can inflict serious losses on low-altitude attackers, while high-altitude bombing by B-52s would require enormous quantities of bombs to compensate for the inevitable lack of accuracy. By contrast, the rail line and highway bridges over which the Iraqis used to send supplies to their main depots around Basra were easily cut once sorties were allocated for that purpose. And now the vast traffic of trucks that daily brings food and water to the Iraqi forces in Kuwait could be attacked much more profitably than those forces themselves.

Moving trucks are "high-contrast" targets, far more easily seen individually than camouflaged armored vehicles or dug-in troops, and they are of course easier to destroy. Five hundred thousand troops in a barren desert cannot live off the land as in Vietnam, nor can they be kept alive by a few camel trains in the night. If U.S. and allied air power were used not as a species of long-range artillery but rather to hunt for supply trucks, the Iraqi troops in Kuwait would soon enough have to be withdrawn, unless Saddam means to abandon them to thirst and starvation. Then Kuwait could be reoccupied virtually without a fight, *sans* the great armored offensive à la Rommel, *sans* the amphibious landings that are inevitable if Marines are present, and *sans* any of the trench-and-gas fighting in the style of the First World War that ex-Army TV commentators have been so eagerly anticipating.

To be sure, if the president's real aim is the destruction of Saddam's regime and his capture à la Noriega, the method here suggested is actually counterproductive. For once Kuwait is restored, the war cannot be continued to achieve the far more ambitious aim of "getting Saddam" as well. But if the administration *is* pursuing that goal, it should be asked to explain how it hopes to stabilize the area in the aftermath, unless it simply means to install Schwarzkopf pasha as viceroy of Mesopotamia.

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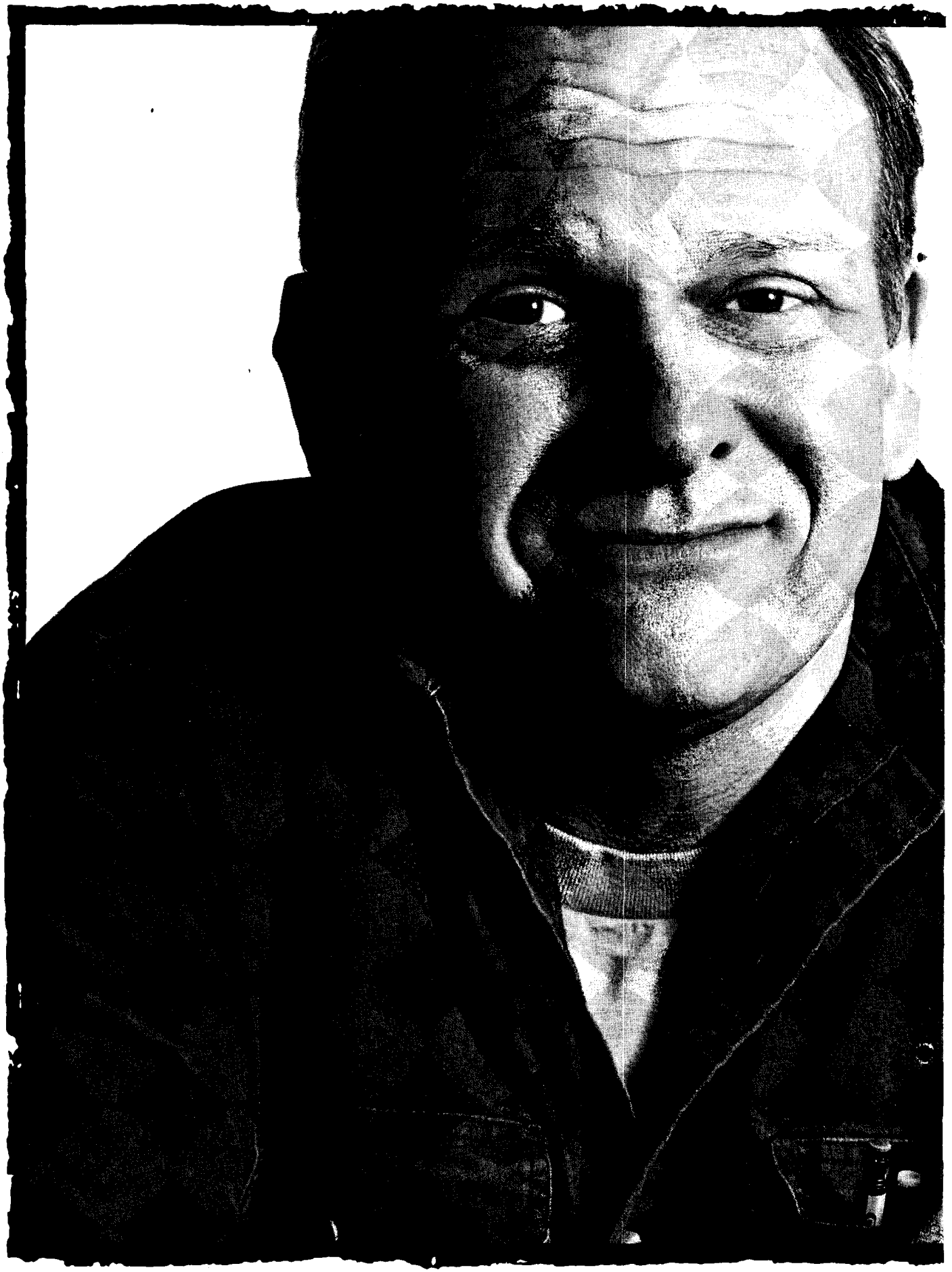

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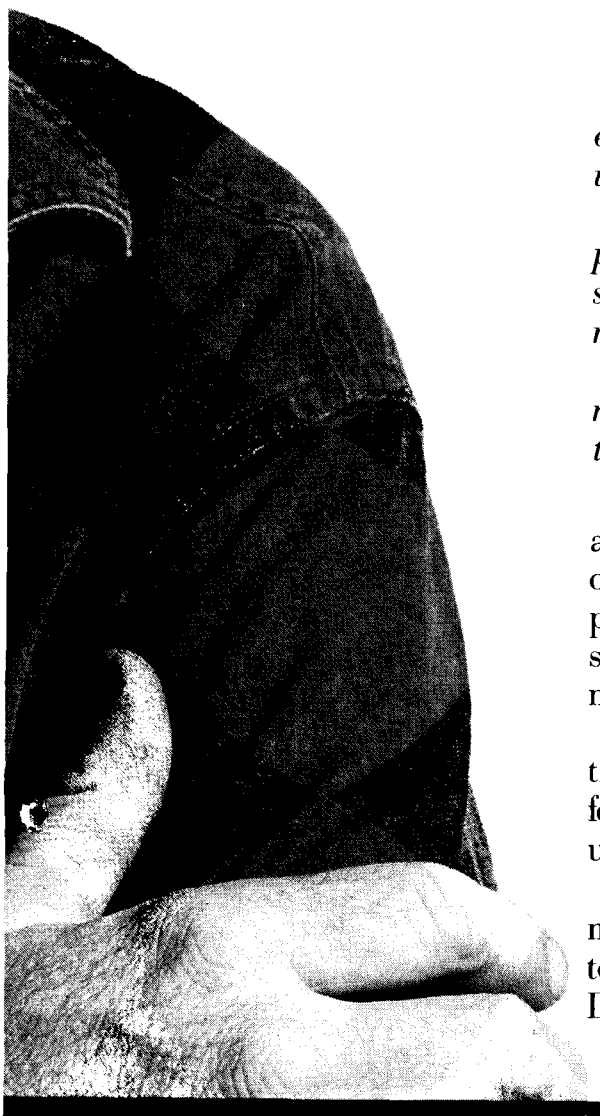

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THE DUSTBIN OF ECONOMICS

By Robert Kuttner

Karl Marx wrote millions of words on the transition from capitalism to communism. He forgot to write word one about the transition from communism to capitalism. More surprising, though he saw all social reality as economically determined, Marx wrote virtually nothing on how economies would actually function under communism—how scarce resources would be allocated, prices set, wages determined, capital allocated. He simply defined private ownership out of existence, and the issue of scarcity neatly vanished.

Indeed, among the many astonishing findings in the ongoing autopsy of communism is how little attention Communists paid to economics. Although Russia's central planners attempt the staggering task of fixing some 15 million individual prices, one can read a shelf of Soviet economics textbooks without ever encountering Supply or Demand. Half the world's people have suffered greatly for this little theoretical glitch.

Eastern Europe's unanticipated struggle to build capitalism raises its own unanswered questions. Should the transition be abrupt or slow? Will the birth agony only add to decades of economic affliction suffered under communism, and give capitalism a bad name? Might there still be such a thing as a "middle way"?

As the East struggles to rebuild, the West is squabbling over the symbolic meaning of communism's fall, projecting onto it our own political conflicts over contending versions of capitalism. If Poland's Solidarity government is pursuing the "shock therapy" model, isn't this a proxy victory for Thatcherism? If Vaclav Havel is going more slowly and retaining some public ownership, shouldn't Western European social democrats take heart? No, and no. In Eastern Europe the ideological meanings of "left" and "right" have all but reversed, and so have the implications of certain policy choices. Most Eastern Europeans seem to want to end up with some form of social market economy—say, of the German variety. But wherever they want to go, the categories of dogma current in the West are not likely to help them get there. If ever there was a time to let Poland be Poland, that time is now.

As a problem of both economic theory and practical economic reconstruction, the transition from a command economy to a market economy is unprecedented. As such it presents an extraordinary laboratory for economists, international bankers, repentant ex-Marxists, and assorted capitalist carpetbaggers plying their trades—and the lab rats are real people, desperately hoping for something better than they had under communism. In modern history there have been other welcome transitions from crushingly tyrannical systems to democracies. But Hitler, Mussolini, and Tojo, as well as Verwoerd, Franco, and Pinochet, whatever their other crimes, did not kill capitalism within their borders. They turned a private economy to their own ends, but essentials such as labor markets, a functioning price system, commercial banks, privately owned enterprises, and an entrepreneurial class all remained. After World War II constitutions had to be written anew, but it was not necessary to reinvent Japanese or German capitalism from scratch.

By contrast, the nations of Eastern Europe, the USSR, and China may not have built communism—a good Marxist would insist that what they built was a travesty of communism—but they surely snuffed out capitalism. Thus, in Soviet-style economies prices were not real prices, because they reflected neither the real cost of production nor the real demand for the product. Wages were not real wages, because for the purchase of many ordinary goods and services the money earned was useless. Interest rates too were bogus, because they did not reflect the real cost of capital or the real return on competing investments. Gosplan economies had an unfortunate habit of producing millions of size ten left shoes, because fundamental forms of economic discipline had ceased to operate. The miracle is that these economies functioned at all.

Before turning to the practical dilemmas of converting these pathetic systems to market economies, or to mixed ones, it is worth lingering for a moment on a nearly forgotten, half-century-old debate about "market socialism." In the 1930s it began dawning on some smart socialists who had been "over into the future" that the future was not working all that well. The most notable proponent of this school was a cosmopolitan Pole, Oskar Lange, who worked at Harvard, Berkeley, Chicago, and London as well as Krakow before World War II, and at Warsaw for twenty years afterward. A socialist widely acquainted with the classics, an admirer

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of Schumpeter as well as of Stalin, Lange hoped to reconcile neoclassical economics with Communist social ideals, as well as to achieve a politics of peaceful coexistence. This endeavor, it turned out, was like squaring the circle.

Lange set out to refute the claim of Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, and Lionel Robbins that socialism was theoretically and practically unrealizable. Lange hoped that a large state sector could coexist with small private enterprises, whose pricing and market discipline would keep the state sector honest. This, in effect, was the inverse of the Western social-democratic idea of "yardstick competition," in which public enterprises would serve as a check on private ones. He urged that state planners pay far more careful attention to prices as the crucial signaling devices necessary for an efficient allocation of resources. But despite Lange's technically ingenious ideas for permitting socialist ownership to coexist with roughly accurate pricing—by simulating markets or using trial-and-error price-setting—no Communist society ever succeeded in following anything remotely like his blueprint. This, as Marx might have said, was no accident.

In the late 1960s Hungary did attempt a bold series of economic reforms aimed at radical decentralization. This coincided with mild political liberalization, and was welcomed, even in the West, as "goulash communism." The specifics included far more autonomy for plant managers and greater worker involvement. Enterprises were empowered to make their own deals with each other; farmers were given freedom to sell to state trading companies or on an open market; and very small-scale private entrepreneurs were tolerated, eventually adding up to some 15 percent of total economic output. Though the reforms stimulated growth, Hungary's leading reform economists, such as Janos Kornai, gradually (and presciently) concluded that the Hungarian middle way was doomed. Paradoxically, in an essentially capitalist economy, like France's or Sweden's, some state ownership, some subsidy, some wage and price regulation are tolerable, even beneficial. But in a command economy prices are so badly distorted, and existing political elites so dependent on maintaining the distortions, that real market socialism cannot function until the bureaucracy is swept away. In short, economic counterrevolution requires political counterrevolution—a Marxian insight turned on its head.

The British economist Alec Nove, in *The Economics of Feasible Socialism*, quoted a Czech Communist asking plaintively: "Why is a capitalist monopoly so much more enterprising than a socialist monopoly?" The answer, of course, is that under capitalism even monopolies, to stay monopolies, have to keep on their toes.

As Kornai's thinking evolved, it became clearer to him that the real impossibility of "market socialism" was more political than economic; the truly inefficient monopoly was not of production, but of political power. Lange's market socialism might be possible in theory, but to replicate the pricing decisions of markets, the managers of the Central Planning Board would need the wisdom and public-mindedness of a Platonic philosopher king—so why not just have markets in the first place? But this, as Kornai is the first to recognize, is easier said than done.

The first problem is the political one. As marketization is painfully proceeding, the dead hand of the past (a useful Marxian phrase) remains, in the form of the state bureaucracy. Moreover, although freedom of speech, and even convertibility of currency, can be proclaimed overnight, the conversion of enterprises to private ownership, the creation of an entrepreneurial class of managers, the sorting out of which enterprises deserve to survive and which belong in history's dustbin (Marx again) all take time. Thus, though marketization, paradoxically enough, needs to be planned, the leftover bureaucracy is unlikely to plan it competently.

A related question is which reforms can feasibly be accomplished with a big bang, and which ones must be done over time. At first some Western economists argued that privatization of enterprises should come first, while budget and currency reform should come more gradually. But this turned out to have it backward. The Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs, who has helped guide Poland's Solidarity government (policy advice is the one thing that has been successfully privatized), has argued, rather in the spirit of Kornai, that the most basic task, the one that logically precedes the others, is price reform. Only by exposing Eastern Europe's economies to full competition from the West will it be possible to determine what its physical plant, its workers, its currency, and so on are actually "worth" on world markets, since local prices are so thoroughly distorted. Beginning January 1, 1990, the Solidarity government devalued the zloty and made it freely convertible. Government subsidies were curtailed. Trade with the West was liberalized. Private enterprise was allowed.

At first blush the "big bang" approach seems gratuitously harsh. If Western Europe could gradually deregulate and privatize in the early post-World War II era under Marshall Plan auspices, why impose a sudden shock cure in the East, except for reasons of ideological purism? This was certainly my early reaction. However, Sachs argues persuasively that the analogy is misleading in two key respects. First, because a market economy was basically intact in Western Europe, there was not the economic need to obliterate absurd price distortions at a stroke. Second, given either an unbroken democratic tradition (in the case of Britain) or a political clean slate (in the case of Germany and Italy), there was no ancien régime still living a bureaucratic afterlife to complicate or sabotage the process of reconstruction.

Yet the big bang solution, even for such basics as currency convertibility and price reform, has its limits. Political democracy in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia is still fragile, and it scarcely exists yet in Romania and Bulgaria. Governments brought to power on public

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expectations of economic as well as political liberalization are understandably reluctant to impose new austerities. Their double bind is excruciating. If they continue subsidizing ultimately uncompetitive industries, they only waste resources and defer a day of reckoning. On the other hand, if they instantly subject antiquated local industry to the full force of global competition, millions of workers are idled, the balance of payments worsens, and political stability is undermined.

In this respect, the West has been extremely shortsighted in its attitude toward both public aid for reconstruction and the collection of debt incurred by the old regime. The United States spent trillions of dollars to contain communism militarily. Yet we are spending virtually nothing to help its victims rejoin the capitalist camp—despite their new allegiance to our own idea of the good society.

Sachs and Kornai, though they have been embraced by free market triumphalists, are at heart what Thatcher might call wets. Sachs, though a thoroughly mainstream economist when it comes to stabilization policy, marketization, budget discipline, currency convertibility, and kindred cold bath remedies, is something of a radical on the subject of debt relief. In order to make stabilization economically bearable, he argues, much of the prior debt of Eastern Europe should be written off. This advice, which he has also given to Latin America, has not made him popular with international bankers.

Kornai also argues passionately, in his 1990 book *The Road to a Free Economy* and in conversation, that though budget reform and price reform can and should be accomplished quickly, privatization will necessarily take time. "I hate the phrase 'shock therapy,' " he told me. "We don't apply the therapy for the sake of the shock. The shock is an inevitable side effect. Budget stabilization, price decontrol, currency convertibility—these should be done quickly, after very careful preparation. If you protract the process, you just prolong the pain. But balancing supply and demand is an iterative process. You can't close down in one day all the factories that don't show a profit. On the question of property ownership, I'm against quick solutions. We need to encourage the evolution of real owners, and this takes time. You can wipe out an entrepreneurial class much faster than you can re-create one.

"That cannot be done in a big bang. Some state-owned enterprises are true dinosaurs; others are not. In Budapest, we had a state barbers' collective. State enterprises like that are not dinosaurs—they're entirely artificial creatures, like King Kong. The problem is what to do with them. Stabilization can be done in a single jump. Change of ownership takes time. You know, some American liberals objected to my book as a laissez-faire book. That is completely wrong. In Eastern Europe, we need a huge injection of market forces because we have had a hyperactive state. I wouldn't say the same thing if I were French or German."

Of the former Comecon countries, Poland has gone the furthest fastest, and is in better shape than it seems. In the short term, the result of its shock therapy was to increase unemployment. Overnight Poland became a society with plenty of goods on the shelves that few could afford to buy. However, the plain economic inefficiencies of the old system were so extreme that offsetting gains came relatively quickly. Official statistics indicating a 30 percent drop in Polish living standards were grossly exaggerated, since they were based on "wages" paid in an artificially valued currency that could not find many products to buy. Real living standards were roughly flat last year. Unemployment is about 8 percent—roughly at Western European levels. And with a more realistic exchange rate and a freely traded zloty, Polish wages are so low by international standards that many Polish products are actually competitive on world markets. Since mid-1990 Poland has been enjoying an export boom, and has a positive trade balance with the West.

Hungary, with a less self-confident government, began a more ambiguous liberalization program only last month, and still retains some controls on its currency. Last year a premature privatization backfired. Several of Hungary's few competitive enterprises were sold off at prices now held to have been too low. Czechoslovakia too has proceeded more cautiously. Interestingly, public opinion polls indicate much deeper pessimism about the immediate economic future in these two countries, where the cold bath has not yet begun, than in Poland. The Gallup organization reported that only 17 percent of Poles expect this year to be worse than last, compared with 78 percent of Czechoslovaks and 84 percent of Hungarians.

As a question of both economic philosophy and social engineering, the most intriguing issue by far is how to structure economic ownership in post-Communist Central Europe. In principle, most property belonged to "the people"—indivisibly. Now, suddenly, shares are being divided up. But how?

Each alternative has benefits and costs. One option is simply to auction off state property to the highest bidder, as Poland abortively attempted. The problem is that foreigners make off with the healthiest enterprises, and potentially salvageable state firms are shut down for lack of current buyers. A second option is what is termed "spontaneous privatization": the existing managers and/or workers are given ownership of the firm. The trouble here is that it leads to an indefensible distribution of windfall prizes or hardships, and rewards malefactors of the ancien régime who happen to be in place as managers.

The richest and ultimately most promising approach is to realize something of the original promise of socialism—by privatizing in a manner that broadly distributes ownership. This is as close as actual societies will ever come to acting out the philosopher John Rawls's thought experiment on how wealth might be justly divided in a hypothetical society. One possibility

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is simply to conceive of Hungary, Poland, or Czechoslovakia as giant mutual funds, and to hand out shares of stock in a basket of state-owned enterprises to all citizens. Unlike the alternative of giving enterprises to their employees, this would diversify risk as well as ownership. Unlike putting them up for bid, it would spread wealth. Over time, as the actual enterprises reorganized and the post-Communist economy stabilized, shares could be traded or individually owned. Sachs favors a broad distribution of shares to workers, households, and financial institutions, as well as some auctions. Kornai favors many roads to privatization, including joint stock companies, family firms, even co-ops. All over the former Soviet bloc, teams of experts are conjuring up variations on this theme of broad private ownership. It is, in my view at least, the single most hopeful social invention that could emerge from the wreckage of communism.

Of course, thus far we have been treating the easiest cases—countries where relatively democratic and stable political regimes already exist and where a Lech Walesa or a Vaclav Havel retains enough prestige to make hard decisions that will cause temporary adversity. In Yugoslavia, the risk of political disintegration is overwhelming attempted economic reforms. In Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania, genuine economic reformers are not yet in charge.

The former German Democratic Republic also presents a special case. In principle, things there should be easiest. These people, after all, are still Germans; they know how to make things. They also have the advantage, seemingly, of having been absorbed by West Germany, which instantly solved the problems of currency convertibility, property law, macroeconomic stabilization, and so on, as well as instantly transfusing many billions of deutsche marks. But East Germany is a disaster. By flooding the former GDR with hard deutsche marks, Bonn created a temporary consumer boom. However, with the end of price controls and subsidies, no consumer in East Germany wants to buy anything made in East Germany, since everything made in the West is better and cheaper. As a result, millions of East Germans who used to make cheap, second-rate stuff for the East German economy are now losing their jobs. East Germany has become the ultimate welfare economy. Ironically, by bringing East German workers into its own high-wage labor market, Bonn has denied its former Communist provinces the possibility of competing on the one basis available to the rest of the bloc: working for very low wages.

The most puzzling special case is China. Although events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have proved once and for all that "market socialism" is an oxymoron, the Chinese have managed a series of ingenious reforms that have tolerated fairly sizable market institutions, and reaped economic benefits accordingly, while still remaining a totalitarian Communist state. Thus Chinese farmers are free, once they have met the state production quota, to produce whatever they can and sell it on the free market. Chinese entrepreneurs, operating Dickensian garment factories or electronics sweatshops with up to a hundred employees, can produce for world markets, in joint ventures with Western capital, and keep a big chunk of their profits. China seems to blend the inhuman faces of socialism and early capitalism beautifully—though political unrest may eventually force a clearer choice.

And in the mother of totalitarian socialist republics, the moment of glasnost and perestroika has come—and gone. Compared with the USSR, Eastern Europe has it easy. Russia seems proof positive that political revolution must be completed before economic revolution can move forward. But political revolution has stalled. Four months ago, after a brief window of possibility, the Shatalin 500-day plan toward marketization and kindred radical reforms were shelved. Gorbachev's regime lacks the legitimacy to extract sacrifice on behalf of an emerging market economy, while it is also losing power to make the existing command economy heed its commands. Production is falling, in part because suppliers are refusing to deliver product for worthless rubles, and local commissars can no longer enforce compliance with the Plan. As a result the economy is degenerating into a barter system. "The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born," a shrewd Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, wrote some fifty years ago. The Soviet Union is on the verge of political disintegration—and because the political repression that would be required to hold it together would also defeat economic reform, disintegration may now be its only real hope.

Communism has turned out to be a century-long detour from the nagging question that perplexed Marx and a great many non-Marxists as well: how to reconcile efficient production with a bearable society. Communism produced neither. The dilemma, however, persists, and the question now will be fought out on the terrain where it always belonged—among variations of a liberal, market society. The collapse of communism doesn't end the debate about the appropriate boundaries between state, market, and civil society, any more than it ended History. On the contrary, it allows a more serious debate to emerge, free from the grotesque distraction of totalitarian communism, which chronically upstaged and embarrassed democratic leftists—or should have.

Despite the collapse of communism, laissez-faire capitalism remains a system vulnerable to instability, as well as injustice. Its paladin, the United States of America, is not exactly free of economic problems. Capitalism itself depends on pre-capitalist or extra-capitalist values such as loyalty and community to anchor the stage on which the dynamic market plays. Otherwise, as Marx wrote, all that is solid melts into air. The complex task of domesticating market society remains. The third way, however, is not reform communism but reform capitalism. ●

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Things Change

The most interesting aspect of **The Object of Beauty** (Avenue) is the casting of John Malkovich. The film is a frothy comedy about a slick pair of Americans—not actually husband and wife, as we discover—who are living it up in a posh London hotel, shopping and wining and dining, while the man is running out of money and is trying to breeze his way through to a financial coup. It's the sort of trapeze-act story that once might have had Cary Grant in the male lead. Or Robert Montgomery or Franchot Tone. Instead, and instead of a fairly similar modern actor like Tom Hanks, we get Malkovich.

Before considering his performance, let's look at the very choice of this man for this part. Malkovich is graceless, oddly built (wide hips), his features approach the brutish, his voice is constricted, he has no polish, and his comic sense is a blank. Yet he was put in a role that asks for the opposite of all these negatives. Why?

A few years ago he was cast as Valmont in *Dangerous Liaisons* possibly because the filmmakers felt that he would bring the eighteenth century closer. (He distanced it further.) But *The Object of Beauty* is already in the present. Possibly these filmmakers thought that Malkovich could actually play it as written; this would have been a depressing mistake on their part. More plausibly, to credit them with some perception, they saw that this is basically a comedy of class—about blithe upper-class people, which is worse—and they could get away with it by using a male lead who would appeal to modern audiences because he is very much more like them than like a Cary Grant. They no longer want a god-star whom they can adore but a pal-star who is one of the gang.

Since the 1960s, American film has developed a new tradition of leading men, the anti-beautiful—Hoffman, Pacino, Stallone prominent among them. (Which is why Tom Cruise seems an old-fashioned star.) In many ways, this move has been invigorating, expansive, has promoted good acting as a criterion rather than mere physical appeal. But the negative side of it is a move toward an imposed commonality—not of human beings but of standards. Ordinary looks, ordinary speech are what many of us feel comfortable with and are therefore what all of us ought to be happy with. This phony-Tolstoyan view of art is responsible, in my view, for much of current widespread deliberate ugliness, all the way from men's clothes up to the grotesqueries that now pass as architecture. (Take a walk down Broadway and realize that those new hotels are not stage sets to be removed, they're *there.*) I don't think it farfetched to see the casting of Malkovich in this film as a tiny part of this large tendency.

As for his performance in itself, it's impossible. He has nothing to bring to the part, and what is more boring/irritating, he doesn't even try. Occasionally in the past, when he has had energetic roles (*The Killing Fields*) or characters in some sort of extremity (*The Sheltering Sky*), he could deal with them. But when the character is ambling along in modes of dailiness, as here, Malkovich simply shows up on the set, and if we don't like it, that's our hard luck. The primary question isn't incompetence; Malkovich's performance here is less incompetent than arrogantly dismissive. The same attitude that flouts ideas of personal distinction goes on to flout obligations as actor. Just the fact of his being there—behaving, not acting—ought to be enough for all of us, he seems to say.

His "wife" is played by Andie MacDowell, who is a different case: she tries hard but fruitlessly. MacDowell first came to prominence in *sex, lies, and videotape* as the wife, which turned out to be the central role. Under Steven Soderbergh's direction, she gave a wistful, muted performance. Since then she has tried to change pace. She has been in two romantic comedies, *Green Card* with Gérard Depardieu and now *The Object of Beauty*, in both of which she was expected to scintillate. She doesn't. She wears clothes very well (she used to be a model), and she is excellently costumed here by Les Lansdown and Sally Booth-Jones, but charm and sparkle, much less the requisite sexuality, are not easily at her command. I've rarely seen a less convincing "madcap" scene than the one in which she and Malkovich come back to their hotel late one evening and she, feeling gay, climbs up on the hotel reception desk and walks across it. (Carole Lombard, Rosalind

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The End of Innocence. *Dyan Cannon's screenplay has a much too familiar subject—a woman driven over the edge by emotional abuse who recovers through therapy. But her performance is truthful, and her directing debut shines. (Reviewed 2/11/91)* **The Godfather: Part III.** *More about that very rich family of drug peddlers, extortionists, and murderers. Not off-puttingly worse than I and II. (1/21/91)* **Hidden Agenda.** *This mystery set in Northern Ireland omits any mention of the Unionist majority. Otherwise, it's adequate work, with Brian Cox solid as an English detective investigating ostensible IRA murders. (2/4/91)* **The Silence of the Lambs.** *Its assets are Anthony Hopkins as a psychiatrist turned cannibalistic killer, Tak Fujimoto's lighting, Jonathan Demme's direction. Otherwise this thriller lacks unity and, after plentiful atmospherics, sense. (2/18/91)* **—SK**

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Russell, Irene Dunne, I hope you're not looking.)

It says something about the casting scheme of this picture that the heroine's girlfriend, Lolita Davidovich, is not only a better actress but a much more attractive woman than MacDowell. This throws emphases wildly out of whack.

The Object of Beauty was written and directed by Michael Lindsay-Hogg. He's an experienced director (*Nasty Habits*, among others), but so far as I know, this is his first screenplay. It's adroitly contrived, amusing, sustained, with bright dialogue and a shadowy counterpoint that helps set off the brightness. The plot—it's very plotty, as it needs to be—focuses on a small Henry Moore piece, which gives the film's title its first meaning. The piece belongs to MacDowell, and the story involves the couple's attempts to sell it in order to tide them over for a while, its theft by a deaf-mute hotel maid, and the consequences of all this, including encounters with the hotel management, dealers, and insurance people.

At the end, the maid scribbles a line on a scrap of paper to explain why she took it. In a sense the screenplay needs to lead to that line, and Lindsay-Hogg meets the challenge. So does Rudi Davies, who plays the maid with silent eloquence.

Lindsay-Hogg's directing is saddled with his two leading actors. The mood and structure of the script are such that we're clearly meant to enjoy merely being in the company of this pair. But their chat and teasings and straits and quarrels and reconciliations seem slow, less because of the director's pacing than the actors' sterility.

As permitted, Lindsay-Hogg shows his quality. He really gets the flavor of this very English luxe hotel. He fixes Malkovich's long comic self-obituary in an overhead shot over a large bed on which the actor lies spread-eagled. When the film goes to the maid's grungy flat for the first time, instead of just cutting to the place or following her in the front door or any other conventional move, Lindsay-Hogg approaches the window of her room through a steady rain. It's a graphic touch that not only changes the location from luxe to tawdry, it also changes the key from amusement to survival.

Lindsay-Hogg's script makes me wish—once again—that a film had a chance, like a play, to be done again with a different cast. This time the actors were chosen according to the new dispensation of commonality, and they sink the show. A grim augury, this, for high comedy. *The Object of Beauty* is only a piece of fluff, but even in the new order, isn't fluff supposed to fly? ●

How the idea of human rights crippled communism.

The Prophet and the Wilderness

BY MICHAEL SCAMMELL

I.

Not nearly enough has been understood about the role of human rights movements in promoting the recent political transformation of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In the discussion of communism's downfall, a great deal has been written about the overextension of empire, the failure of central planning, the lack of industrial development, the weakness of agriculture, the evils of bureaucracy, and the breakdown of the Party; and it would be foolish to deny the importance of any of these factors in contributing to this epochal collapse. Still, most of these shortcomings were present in the Communist system since at least the Second World War, and many of them date back all the way to the October Revolution. How is it that they assumed such importance in the mid-1980s, and became decisive in 1989?

Memoirs
by Andrei Sakharov
translated by Richard Lourie
(Knopf, 773 pp., $29.95)

Moscow and Beyond: 1986 to 1989
by Andrei Sakharov
translated by Antonina Bouis
(Knopf, 168 pp., $19.95)

There was clearly a major failure of will at the top: the governing apparatus grew fatigued, the Party sclerotic, the nomenklatura corrupted by its absolute power. Still, someone was needed to notice the fatigue, to probe the sclerosis, to contest the power, and finally to offer a viable alternative to the system, thereby undermining its legitimacy and preparing its downfall. The Reaganites and the neoconservatives would like us to believe that it was American resolve that accomplished these things; and American intransigence certainly played its part in encouraging and hastening certain internal processes.

Yet the largest share of the historical credit, it seems to me, should go to the human rights activists throughout the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, to the "dissidents," as they came to be called. It was they who first perceived the gravity of the crisis into which the Communist system had brought itself; they who sacrificed their work, their careers, their families, and sometimes their lives to challenge its hegemony; they who unfailingly drew attention to the appalling mess caused by the disintegration of the system; and they who prodded a quiescent population into supporting a plausible opposition. Many of them have now reaped the reward, if reward it be, of replacing their former oppressors in the highest reaches of government, or of leading the opposition in the emerging constitutional democracies.

The true magnitude of their achievement, however, goes beyond the practical and the pragmatic. What has been consistently overlooked, in the East and the West, is the vital role that human rights has played as an ideological force.

Throughout its history, and almost until the end of the Brezhnev period of "stagnation," communism miraculously retained a moral edge. Somehow the suspicion remained that it was ethically superior to the ideologies and the systems that opposed it, especially to capitalism. It is not so very long since even Brezhnev's functionaries enjoyed that smug sense of ideological superiority that came with being "on the side of history," which was Marxism-Leninism's great gift, of course, the confidence that put so many of its opponents on the defensive, even when reason told them otherwise. Nobody could have guessed, when Brezhnev became First Secretary of the Party in 1964, that the still inchoate, unsystematized, and wimpish doctrine of human rights, which was just beginning to take shape in parts of Europe, would flourish and expand until it challenged and then overthrew the invincible doctrine of class struggle, economic rights, and universal equality.

The strength of human rights as an idea and an ideal derived from the fact that it was deeply rooted in notions of

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the dignity and the autonomy of the individual, who could not be arbitrarily abused or persecuted in the name of any group or collective. Thus, when Amnesty International was founded in London in 1962, its organizers anchored themselves to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ("everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression"), and then set about applying its principles to all individuals everywhere, whatever their status, class, race, religion, or nationality, or the political complexion of their governments. Amnesty also established a miraculously simple mechanism whereby individuals in countries where these principles were respected could intercede for those in places where they were not. It became a grassroots organization of a new type, domestic and personal in its day-to-day operations (individuals writing petitions for individuals), global in its application.

Amnesty spawned a multitude of similar or more specialized groups and galvanized existing organizations into fresh activism. By the mid-1970s there was a rapidly growing network of highly motivated and increasingly efficient human rights bodies that united activists from the more or less democratic countries into a powerful extraterritorial citizens' lobby. They would not have had anything like the impact they ultimately achieved, however, had persecuted minorities in other parts of the world not begun simultaneously to grope their way toward a similar doctrine of individual rights, and to see in these ideas the only possible platform on which to oppose abuses of overwhelming power.

This was especially true in two areas of the world that, according to the political categories of the cold war, appeared to be ideological opposites: Latin America, with its fascist-type military dictatorships of the right, and the Soviet bloc, with its Communist dictatorships of the left. In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the tasks of the opposition were very different from those in Latin America. Civil society, as most of the world knows it, had been destroyed and supplanted by a Communist Party whose organizations and representatives penetrated every social organism, every street, and every building. No group or organization was allowed to operate independently of the Party or its control, not even the church (although the degree of control of the different churches varied from faith to faith and country to country, Poland being the freest in this respect). Every attempt to maintain an independent point of view, or to create an independent organization of any kind, was ipso facto subversive, counterrevolutionary ("he who is not with us is against us"), the result of false consciousness and "bourgeois" thinking—in a word, treason.

What the idea of human rights offered individuals confronted by this crushingly monolithic system was a seemingly nonsubversive ("non-ideological") platform from which to oppose it. There was nothing obviously contradictory between the rights of the individual to freedom of opinion, belief, assembly, and so on, and the rights that were supposedly conferred by Communist ideology. From Stalin onward, Communist Party leaders took great care to include these rights in their written constitutions, even if they had invariably reserved to themselves the crucial "right" to determine how all those other rights should be interpreted. And so, in the early 1960s, when a more universal idea of human rights began to gain ground in Western countries, there seemed some hope that the Communist interpretation of human rights might converge with it. Indeed, the strategy of early Soviet dissidents like Alexander Esenin-Volpin and Valery Chalidze was precisely to force the Soviet authorities to observe their own laws, their own legal enshrinement of some of these rights.

After the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, it became clear that "convergence" was out of the question. It was then that other dissidents, not only in the Soviet Union but also in Poland and (somewhat later) in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, set out on the long march to create an ethical and social alternative to communism, to establish an informal set of institutions parallel to, and independent of, official structures in their countries—to create, in other words, a civil society. In every case, their guide and their goal was the protection of the human rights of the individual.

For these stirrings to take place, there had to be a long period of growth and development, during which individuals and groups appeared who grasped the essential principles of human rights, assimilated them, and began to apply them in their own surroundings. Many of these individuals seemed to come out of nowhere and achieved public notice for the first time as already fully fledged "dissidents," usually as a result of being persecuted or put on trial or jailed. But others came from established positions in all walks of life; their transformation into opponents of the regime was a personal response to the ethical dilemmas posed by their ways of living and working. They emerged slowly, step by step. The moment of their transformation from "loyal citizen" to "dissident" is impossible to determine. What is certain, however, is that such people almost never turned back.

II.

Among these latter individuals, no example is more dramatic than that of Andrei Sakharov. What makes Sakharov's career so absorbing and so emblematic, as both volumes of these memoirs demonstrate, is not simply the fame that he won at the end of his life as the Soviet Union's most eminent and powerful "dissident," or the enormous distance that he traveled from darling of the establishment to persecuted pariah, but the really heroic grandeur of his psychological and emotional odyssey from a bashful and introspective theoretical physicist to a fearless public defender of human rights.

There seemed to be little in Sakharov's brilliant early career as a scientist to indicate the crises that lay ahead. In 1948, at the age of 27, one year before the Soviet Union exploded its first atom bomb, he was invited to join the research team of Igor Tamm, which was already working to develop an even more powerful weapon. For twenty years, in Moscow and at a secret research center in Turkmenia in Central Asia, known by the Orwellian code name of the Installation, Sakharov labored loyally in the service of this cause. Owing to the secrecy of the operation, he lived in virtual anonymity. But his role was pivotal, and he came to be known as the "father" of the Soviet H-bomb.

He was loaded with honors. In 1953, when the first Soviet thermonuclear device was exploded (trailing the Americans by about nine months), Sakharov was rewarded with the title of Hero of Socialist Labor, a Stalin Prize worth half a million rubles, an expensive dacha in an exclusive suburb of Moscow, and access to luxury stores reserved for top members of the nomenklatura. That same year he became the first person ever to be elected to the Soviet Academy of Sciences by a unanimous vote. Two years later, in November 1955, Sakharov and his fellow scientists successfully tested their first H-bomb, this time about a year and a half behind the Americans. It was a stunning achievement for the generally backward Soviet scientific establishment, and it landed Sakharov a second Hero of Socialist Labor medal and a Lenin Prize.

But it was then that Sakharov experienced his first twinges of doubt about the morality of nuclear weapons. In 1958 he published a scholarly article on the genetic effects of radioactive fallout from weapons testing, in which he calculated that the nuclear bombs tested by both sides up to 1957 would probably result in

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the untimely deaths of a half-million people. Sakharov also took issue with Edward Teller's views on the efficacy of mutually assured deterrence, and argued that "peaceful coexistence, disarmament, and, above all, a halt to nuclear testing" was the best route to "a better life for all of mankind" (the latter phrase was taken from one of Teller's books). But his qualms were stated in an article commissioned and disseminated by the Soviet government. It hardly qualified as dissent.

Still, a seed had been planted. Three years later Sakharov experienced his first real crisis, when Khrushchev announced that the Soviet Union would break a previously agreed-on moratorium with the West, which Sakharov wholeheartedly supported, and resume nuclear testing unilaterally. In 1961, at a Kremlin meeting between government leaders and nuclear scientists, Sakharov boldly sent a note to Khrushchev suggesting that such a step might jeopardize the test ban negotiations and the cause of disarmament and world peace. Khrushchev angrily responded with a reprimand in front of the other guests:

> Sakharov . . . has moved beyond science into politics. Here he's poking his nose where it doesn't belong. You can be a good scientist without understanding a thing about politics . . . . Leave politics to us—we're the specialists. You make your bombs and test them and we won't interfere with you, we'll help you.

Sakharov, well aware of his special status, was suitably chastened by Khrushchev's remarks, and for the time being he chose to obey his political masters, though not without misgivings. At a meeting the following month, Khrushchev inquired whether Sakharov realized his error. "My opinion hasn't changed," replied Sakharov, "but I do my work and carry out orders." The orders this time were to test a device of record-breaking power nicknamed "Big Bomb." Sakharov agreed to the test, on the condition that he could test a "clean" version of the bomb, which would reduce its absolute power and also the amount of radioactive fallout produced. The bomb was successfully exploded in 1961, and a few months later Sakharov was awarded his third Hero of Socialist Labor medal, which was personally pinned on by Khrushchev, with a Russian bearhug and a kiss.

In 1962, however, Sakharov experienced a more serious crisis. East and West were testing again. The Soviets had set up two nuclear fission installations in place of one, on the principle that competition between the two experiments would accelerate progress, and they proposed to test their next device also in two versions. Sakharov was appalled. He was prepared to accept a single test, but he calculated that a second test would cause at least 100,000 unnecessary deaths from the extra fallout. He fought the decision all the way up to the Politburo, and even called Khrushchev to oppose it. But he failed, and his memoir reveals that "it was a terrible defeat for me. A terrible crime was about to be committed, and I could do nothing to prevent it. I was overcome by my impotence, unbearable bitterness, shame, and humiliation. I put my face down on my desk and wept."

ANDREI SAKHAROV IN 1943

All this was, of course, far from the public eye. Sakharov was still virtually unknown outside the Soviet scientific establishment, and the Moscow Test Ban Treaty of 1963 allowed him to assuage his doubts and to maintain his loyalty without doing further violence to his conscience. Apart from a brief and fiery campaign to defeat the election of a Lysenko protégé to the Academy of Sciences, he retired into the shadows of anonymity again to devote himself to studying the peaceful uses of nuclear explosions, and to exploring the intricacies of "grand" cosmology. But he could not insulate himself entirely from weapons development, nor could he ignore continuing Soviet discussions throughout the 1960s about military strategy. He came to the conclusion that thermonuclear war was being discussed as a real possibility, as a "fact of life":

> I could not stop thinking about this, and I came to realize that the technical, military, and economic problems are secondary; the fundamental issues are political and ethical. Gradually, subconsciously, I was approaching an irrevocable step—a wide-ranging public statement on war and peace and other global issues. I took that step in 1968.

The step in question was the publication of *Reflections on Progress, Peaceful Coexistence, and Intellectual Freedom*, Sakharov's first and most celebrated book. It made him a celebrity and a "dissident" overnight, although he and his family and his friends were hardly aware of it at the time.

How did it come about that it was Sakharov who broke out of the charmed circle of privilege and power and declared his public opposition to the government's policies, rather than, say, his distinguished mentor Tamm, or any of the other equally brilliant and skeptical colleagues described in these pages? Few of them, according to Sakharov, had any genuine illusions about the political masters they served, yet not one was prepared to push his dissent to the point of public disagreement.

A recurring theme of Sakharov's memoirs is his singular apartness from the mainstream of Soviet life. His background was typical enough for a member of the Soviet intelligentsia. There were lawyers, priests, and teachers among his forebears. Both his parents were teachers, and after the October Revolution the family had been "compressed" into an overcrowded communal apartment, with primitive services and very little space or comfort. Unlike most people in their predicament who were forced to share with strangers, four branches of the Sakharov family were able to live together, thus preserving a modicum of privacy and intima-

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cy. Andrei (who was born in 1921) and his younger brother Georgi grew up in a cozy, protected environment that cushioned them from many of the rigors of life in postrevolutionary Moscow.

There was also the larger-than-life-size figure of his successful father. Although he taught physics until almost the end of his life, Dmitri Sakharov was best known as the author of popular scientific works such as *The Struggle for Light*, and of textbooks such as *Problems in Physics*, which went through thirteen editions and brought him considerable sums of money. The son adored the father, whom he describes as gentle, wise, and compassionate, with a great sense of humor and a capacity for enjoying life. He was fond of that most un-Russian saying, "a sense of moderation is the greatest gift of the gods," which was to have considerable influence on his son.

Dmitri was deeply devoted to his children, and determined to give them the best education possible. Still, it comes as something of a shock to learn that Sakharov received the first seven years of his education almost entirely from private tutors, and continued to be tutored at home even after entering high school in 1934. One of those tutors was his father, who took it for granted that the son would study physics—which he did, graduating from high school as one of only two honors students in his class and thus gaining entry to the physics department of Moscow University. In 1942 he graduated from the university with a brilliant record, completing a five-year course in four years owing to the outbreak of the war.

Sakharov's sheltered background appears to have endowed him from the beginning with a certain aloofness. He writes that he made "no friends and no enemies" at high school, and no friends at the university until his last year there. He hardly noticed when several of his classmates left to dig anti-tank ditches, or when several failed to return. When called for enlistment himself, he failed both the aptitude test for the air force and the medical test for general military service, and was eventually assigned to a cartridge factory, where he was so maladroit that he was sent out to chop trees. When he was transferred to quality control in the blanking shop, he enraged his bosses by refusing to turn a blind eye to rusty shell casings. Only when he made it into the laboratory did he distinguish himself: he invented a device for testing the hardness of armor-piercing shells, for which he received 3,000 rubles and a patent for his design.

There is a curious paradox in this mild-mannered young physicist's attraction to working with armaments. In wartime, this was perhaps inevitable, and Sakharov spent the rest of the war perfecting shell designs. But after the war, too, while working on relativity theory at the Physics Institute of the Academy of Sciences, he kindled to news of the atom bomb, and dreamed of improving upon existing devices. When nuclear fission research was introduced into the Physics Institute, he did not hesitate to join, and threw himself with zeal into the quest for a superbomb.

In his memoirs, he offers a variety of explanations for his single-minded obsession of the time. One is summed up in Fermi's famous remark that research on thermonuclear explosions was "great physics," or, as Sakharov puts it, "a genuine theoretician's paradise." A second reason was the freshness of the memory of the recent world war: it, too, was an "exercise in barbarity," so that the inhuman nature of the bombs that he was trying to build seemed no worse than what had gone before. And third, the Soviets shared American beliefs about strategic parity and the value of deterrence—for their own side, of course.

But ultimately something more intangible was involved:

> Our initial zeal . . . was inspired more by emotion than by intellect. The monstrous destructive force, the scale of our enterprise and the price paid for it by our poor, hungry, war-torn country, the casualties resulting from the neglect of safety standards and the use of forced labor in our mining and manufacturing activities, all these things inflamed our sense of drama and inspired us to make a maximum effort so that the sacrifices—which we accepted as inevitable—would not be in vain. We were possessed by a true war psychology, which became still more overpowering after our transfer to the Installation.

So it was a matter of politics all along. The memoirist, to his credit, does not skirt his own cold war attitudes, or his personal responsibility for developing the bomb, and some of his most fascinating pages are devoted to the morality of this issue, particularly when he comes to discuss the Oppenheimer-Teller conflict.

Sakharov sympathizes with Oppenheimer in these pages. He is aware of the resemblance of his own later behavior to Oppenheimer's. And yet he decides, paradoxically, in favor of Teller, on the grounds that the Soviet government of the time would never have honored an American-Soviet agreement to abandon research on the H-bomb. "Any U.S. move toward abandoning or suspending work on a thermonuclear weapon would have been perceived either as a cunning, deceitful maneuver, or as evidence of stupidity or weakness." In Sakharov's view, it was not the principle of Oppenheimer's dissent, but its timing, that was wrong:

> I cannot help but feel deeply for and empathize with Oppenheimer, whose personal tragedy has become a universal one. Some striking parallels between his fate and mine arose in the 1960s, and later I was to go even further than Oppenheimer had. But in the 1940s and 1950s my position was much closer to Teller's, practically a mirror image . . . so that, in defending his actions, I am also defending what I and my colleagues did at the time.

The publication of *Reflections* in 1968 might be described as Sakharov's abandonment of Teller's position for Oppenheimer's. It started him down the path that was to take him "even further" than the latter's. And his timing, in retrospect, was also not fortuitous. The "thaw" that had begun in all areas of Soviet life after Stalin's death, and especially after Khrushchev's secret speech of 1956, had ground to a halt by the early 1960s, and it was beginning to be reversed even before Khrushchev's overthrow in 1964. The trial of the writers Sinyavsky and Daniel in 1966 indicated a decisive turn by Brezhnev's regime toward neo-Stalinism.

It also demonstrated, however, that a significant number of Soviet intellectuals, including many from among the scientific elite, were not ready to reverse themselves easily. It was the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial, together with a series of connected trials of Ginzburg, Bukovsky, Litvinov, and others, that radicalized the Soviet intelligentsia, and led to the formation of what was to become a powerful and vocal dissident movement, with civil and human rights as its battle cry. Sakharov was still remote from those circles, but he signed at least a couple of the protest letters that began to circulate at that time (including one on behalf of Sinyavsky and Daniel), and he wrote *Reflections* under the immediate influence of the Prague Spring, on which so many Soviet intellectuals had pinned their hopes for liberalization at home. When Czechoslovakia was brutally crushed, and Sakharov was dismissed from the Installation on security grounds, he was brought face to face not only with his own powerlessness, but also with the powerlessness of Soviet intellectuals generally to influence the course of political and social events. And he finally understood how devoid of rights, whether human or civil, the individual in Soviet society was.

The subsequent speed of his transformation into a dissident and human rights activist was breathtaking. In 1969 he still considered himself a part of the establishment: "Although I had bluntly criticized

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many official actions and offered advice concerning future policy, deep down I still felt that the government I criticized was *my* government." In 1970 he was still expecting to be able to get Yuri Andropov, the head of the KGB, on the telephone. As late as 1971 he had plans for a personal meeting with Brezhnev. With *Reflections*, however, he had crossed a Rubicon.

In no time at all he was swiftly sought out by some of the most prominent dissidents in the land. Solzhenitsyn, himself officially silenced by censorship, sent Sakharov his criticisms of *Reflections* and visited him to discuss them. Valentin Turchin (the author of a work, similar to Sakharov's, called *The Inertia of Fear*) enlisted Sakharov's support in writing an appeal to Soviet leaders for democracy and intellectual freedom. Roy Medvedev, whom Sakharov had first met in 1966, and who also signed the Turchin appeal, persuaded him to intervene on behalf of his twin brother, Zhores, who had just been incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital. And Valery Chalidze accompanied Sakharov on his first trip to observe a political trial and later enrolled him, somewhat against his will, in Chalidze's newly founded Committee on Human Rights.

It was through Chalidze that Sakharov met Elena Bonner, the woman who was to have a profound influence on his further development. It appears to have been love at first sight. He was emotionally ripe for it: his first wife, Klava, had died of cancer in March 1969. Although he is reticent on the subject, it would appear that their marriage was less than happy; there are ample hints that Sakharov's relations not only with his first wife's family but also with her two children were not very close. Sakharov himself had been remote emotionally and physically, having spent many years closeted at the Installation in Central Asia, swallowed up by research and professional duties. Perhaps he recalled the troubling last words of his father, who died in 1961: "When you were at the university, you said that uncovering the secrets of nature could make you happy. We don't choose our fate, but I'm sorry that yours took a different turn; I imagine you could have been happier." It was not clear whether his father was speaking of personal or professional matters, but after the appearance of *Reflections* his Aunt Tusya told Sakharov that his father would have been proud of him.

Bonner, a pediatrician, was the daughter of two distinguished Old Bolsheviks, the Armenian revolutionary leader Gevork Alikhanov and Ruth Bonner, a descendant of Siberian Jews. In 1937 her parents were arrested in one of Stalin's purges and Alikhanov was killed in the camps (Ruth survived and died in 1987), wrenching the 14-year-old Elena and her brother from their privileged home and depositing them with their impoverished grandmother. Despite this tragic, though typical, background, Elena was a loyal Soviet citizen; she had even joined the Party in the mid-1960s. But the invasion of Czechoslovakia radicalized her, too, and in 1970, when Sakharov met her, she had just involved herself in the Leningrad hijacking trial, in which one of the principal defendants was her friend Edward Kuznetsov. When Kuznetsov and two others were condemned to death, Bonner displayed incredible energy and ingenuity in organizing their defense. Sakharov was drawn into it, and their joint efforts in that passionate, humanitarian campaign seem to have cemented their love. In January 1972, mainly at Sakharov's insistence, they were married.

Thereafter there was hardly a case or a cause in which Sakharov and Bonner were not engaged: the incarceration of healthy people in insane asylums, the expulsion of the Crimean Tatars, freedom of religion, freedom to emigrate, repression of the ethnic Germans, censorship, suppression of the samizdat *Chronicle of Current Events*, the Borisov-Fainberg case, the Bukovsky case, the Krasnov-Levitin trial, the Yakir-Krasin trial. From composing another closely reasoned missive to the authorities on economic, social, and foreign policy (the "Memorandum" of 1971), Sakharov progressed to writing statements on violations of human rights, letters of protest, and appeals for persecuted individuals.

The culmination of this first burst of activity came in 1973 when Sakharov, together with Solzhenitsyn, became the object of a virulent hate campaign in the Soviet press, as well as the victim of numerous provocations. By now the two giants of the dissident movement had become a factor in foreign policy. Those were the days of détente ("a polite form of the cold war," Sakharov called it), when Nixon and Kissinger were cozying up to Brezhnev and moving toward a form of condominium based on the superior force of the two superpowers. Brezhnev wanted access to American credits and technology, but Congress and the American people had their eyes on the Soviet government's treatment of its dissidents and its suppression of human rights, and preferred to listen to Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn, whose message was that the Soviet leadership was cruel, unprincipled, and unreliable. How could one trust the foreign policy, they argued, of a government that persecuted its own citizens? It didn't cut much ice with the White House, but Congress passed the Jackson-Vanik amendment and Brezhnev's version of détente virtually collapsed.

Sakharov is exceedingly interesting on the subject of his relations with Solzhenitsyn during this period. The two men respected one another, but Solzhenitsyn was irritated by Sakharov's openness to all comers and by his readiness to espouse all forms of protest, and Sakharov found Solzhenitsyn unduly calculating in his campaigns. Sakharov reports that he was chilled, as early as 1970, by Solzhenitsyn's response to a question about what to do on behalf of two celebrated and harshly persecuted dissidents: "Nothing! They attacked the enemy with a battering ram. They chose their own fate and can't be saved. The attempt would only harm them and oth-

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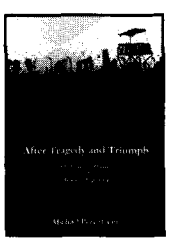

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ers." Later, in 1973, when both men were under fire, Solzhenitsyn sent his second wife to remonstrate with Sakharov over the Jackson-Vanik amendment, saying that it was biased in favor of the Jews and did nothing to solve Russia's other problems. At their last meeting in the Soviet Union, a few months later, Solzhenitsyn reproached Sakharov for his alleged willingness to emigrate, ignoring the fact that Sakharov's plan to go abroad was motivated by a desire to save his stepchildren from persecution. His intention, undoubtedly unrealistic, was to return to the Soviet Union immediately.

The two men were vastly different in background, upbringing, temperament, character, and personal convictions. It was inevitable that they would disagree about almost everything, and they did. In 1973 Solzhenitsyn published his *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*, which was in essence a reply to, and a polemic with, Sakharov's *Reflections*. Sakharov responded with a criticism of the *Letter*, to which Solzhenitsyn replied again. The debate between the conservative, traditionalist author and the liberal, democratic scientist reenacted in many ways the old battle between Slavophiles and Westerners. It continues to this day: Solzhenitsyn's latest recommendations for political change, *How Are We to Reorder Russia?*, appeared in the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in November, while the anniversary of Sakharov's death last month brought admiring recapitulations of his philosophy.

The personal fates of the two protagonists also diverged after 1973. In January 1974 Solzhenitsyn was arrested and deported to West Germany. Sakharov remained to continue his personal crusade, and it is typical of his single-mindedness that, having embraced the cause of human rights, he should carry his campaign to its logical conclusions. It was not sufficient for him to write articles and protests, telephone, lobby, talk to foreign journalists, attend trials, even demonstrate in support of his goals, as someone of his eminence might be expected to do. In June 1974, during President Nixon's visit to Moscow, he decided on the extreme measure of a hunger strike. Had he been a writer, one might have suspected him of seeking material—and it is not difficult to understand some of Solzhenitsyn's exasperation with the seeming naïveté and pig-headedness of some of Sakharov's tactics. But as these memoirs show, they were brilliantly of a piece with the man.

Sakharov had thoroughly assimilated the principles that were painfully worked out by the pioneers of the dissident movement in the 1960s and early 1970s. The principles were these: that to oppose the Soviet regime successfully, one had to be absolutely true to one's convictions, never compromise where moral values were concerned, maintain complete openness in a society obsessed by secrecy, and above all hold fast to one's inner freedom whatever the cost. Similar principles were being worked out by dissidents in many of the other countries of Eastern Europe, in a movement that would acquire an irresistible momentum in the years to come. In the early 1970s, however, there was nothing inevitable about that momentum.

These exacting principles were fiendishly difficult to live up to in daily life. Almost a saintly patience and devotion to the cause were required, the qualities that so many of the dissidents displayed, at least in their finest moments. In the event, the principles withstood the test of practice and fueled all the leaders of the human rights movements throughout the Soviet bloc, endowing them with amazing strength and durability. Sakharov was to become one of the finest of those leaders, in the courage of his personal behavior and in the clarity of his thinking. He quickly grasped that the dissidents were engaged in a mortal struggle with a dying ideology, and that, although that ideology would, in its death throes, continue to claim many victims, the idea of human rights was intrinsically superior.

This was a truth that Jimmy Carter, drawing on the experience of the civil rights movement in the United States, also intuited when he threw the weight of the American government behind the drive for human rights and welcomed their entrenchment as a natural and rightful extension of the ideals of American democracy. Sakharov immediately recognized the importance of this step when he heard about Carter's inaugural address, with its statement that "our moral sense dictates a clear-cut preference for those societies which share with us an abiding respect for human rights." Though he did not approve of Carter's inconsistency in his subsequent policies toward the Soviet Union, Sakharov writes that "the fact remains striking that for the first time the head of a great power had announced an unambiguous commitment to the international defense of human rights."

The Soviet leaders, too, had recently been forced to pay lip service to human rights by agreeing to "basket three," the provision about respect for human rights established by the signatory states of the Helsinki Final Act in the fall of 1975—the same year that Sakharov published *My Country and the World* and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for "his love of truth and strong belief in the inviolability of the human being." The Soviets had done everything they could to water down and to restrict the provisions of basket three, but they had not foreseen that they would be faced with an American government (backed by Western European leaders) that was serious about human rights for the first time since the war. Basket three presented human rights groups throughout the Communist bloc with an unexpected political lever with which to pressure their repressive governments.

The Helsinki Final Act gave the West an ideological edge. The words "human rights" began to appear with increasing frequency on the front pages of *Pravda* and other Soviet newspapers, and no matter how they were twisted and turned inside out to mean their opposite, or unfavorably contrasted with the "economic rights" supposedly guaranteed by the Soviet regime, there they were for all Soviet citizens to read and to digest. As Simon Leys recently noted about China, you know you have won the debate when your opponent begins

Drinking Cold Water on the Acropolis at Lindos

No clouds cross the skillet sky.
The temple's marble retains its translucence,
the color of wheat on fire—
like the hair of the girls
who (to beating drums and shrill cries) jumped
from the precipice to the reefs
below, those rows of shark's
teeth laced with foam.
This is Aphrodite's place.
The white birds wheel slowly in the haze,
and the sun is a mirror, tilted to blind.
The bleached sea stretches away south,
to Africa, but filling my cup
from a battered canteen,
raising it to my lips and closing my eyes,
I shiver as light, not water, races
down my throat, into my limbs.
You told me the light was everything here.
Now I see it.

NICHOLAS CHRISTOPHER

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to use your ideas; and so it was in the Soviet case, although few realized it at the time. The very readiness of the Soviet press to argue the merits of human rights was a battle lost, even if the larger war was to continue for another ten years. For this reason, if any American administration deserves the historical credit for promoting the democratic revolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, it is Carter's more than Reagan's.

But ten years is a very long time. Sakharov was obliged to embark on many more hunger strikes, to endure unspeakable privations before the goal was reached. The middle section of his *Memoirs* reads like a Who's Who of the dissident world, like an encyclopedia of Soviet trials and Soviet repression. Sakharov was to see close friends imprisoned, exiled, sent abroad, or killed. His children and stepchildren were victimized and forced to emigrate. His wife had her near-blindness exploited and was herself humiliated before she could obtain medical treatment. The culmination came with Sakharov's public opposition to the invasion of Afghanistan, his exile to Gorky, and his six years of dreadful persecution and blackmail, including hospitalization and brutal force-feeding. Bonner has already written eloquently about the Gorky period in *Alone Together*, her book on the same subject; Sakharov adds new details on those harrowing events, but he does not change our understanding of them.

III.

The *Memoirs* end with Gorbachev's historic phone call to Sakharov in Gorky in December 1986, informing him that the decree on his banishment had been rescinded and that he and Elena Bonner could return to Moscow. The next (and last) three years of Sakharov's life are described in *Moscow and Beyond*, which Sakharov completed literally on the eve of his death. *Moscow and Beyond* is more than a coda to the *Memoirs*. It is a dramatic eyewitness account of the birth of the parliamentary process in the Soviet Union, and of Sakharov's participation, first reluctant and then selflessly energetic, in that process as the uncrowned leader of the opposition.

By the time Sakharov returned to Moscow, Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika were reasonably well advanced, and Gorbachev himself, in his speeches and in his book *Perestroika*, was expressing many of the very ideas for which Sakharov had been punished and sent into exile. Sakharov was skeptical at first. But unlike many of his fellow dissidents, he did not console himself with bitter jokes and personal recriminations against the Soviet leaders, nor did he take a pessimistic view of the political processes under way in his country. He concluded that Gorbachev meant business, that the reforms were serious and genuine, that the dissidents had in effect won their initial battle against the system. The important thing was to build on that victory, to entrench the gains that had been made.

Some of Sakharov's dissident friends feared that he was badly informed and gullible in his support for Gorbachev, but not for a moment did Sakharov lose his head or allow himself to be co-opted. From Gorky he had mailed Gorbachev a long list of political prisoners whose release he demanded as a sign of Gorbachev's good intentions, and whom he referred to again in their telephone conversation. Many were being set free, but Sakharov continued to pressure the government for swifter action. Although physically weakened by his ill treatment in Gorky and already in his mid-60s, he was indefatigable in championing the rights of the uprooted Crimean Tatars, the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and Sumgait, the Georgians slaughtered in the streets of Tbilisi, the Meskhetians in Uzbekistan, the independence movements in the Baltic states, and countless individuals. He traveled personally to Azerbaijan and Armenia as part of a fact-finding mission, to Komi in Siberia in support of an imprisoned dissident. He became an active member of the governing council of the Memorial Society, an unofficial organization set up in early 1988 to commemorate the millions of political prisoners who had died in the Soviet Union during Soviet rule. He supported demands for full openness about the Chernobyl disaster, and he championed the publication of *The Gulag Archipelago*.

Everyone wanted his views on every conceivable aspect of Soviet policy, and his answers were treated with as much respect as if he had headed a party of millions. Finally, in January 1989, he bowed to the inevitable and acceded to multiple requests to stand for elections to the reorganized Congress of People's Deputies. There were some near-farcical maneuverings at the Academy of Sciences to deny him the nomination, but in May he was comfortably voted in with a group of similarly liberal colleagues. Almost at once he became one of five chairmen of the main parliamentary opposition, the Interregional Group of Deputies. (Yeltsin was, and remains, another.)

By this time Sakharov had met Gorbachev face to face, once at a meeting of the International Foundation for the Survival and Development of Humanity ("... he appeared intelligent, self-possessed, and quick-witted in discussion, and the policies he was pursuing at the time impressed me as consistently liberal"), and again at a meeting between Gorbachev and leading representatives of the intelligentsia, where Sakharov angered the president by his spirited defense of the Armenians. In the Soviet parliament, however, the two men clashed repeatedly. It began on the very first day of the Congress, when Sakharov opposed the automatic election of Gorbachev as president without a proper debate, and demanded that the Congress be given increased powers for its work. A testy Gorbachev responded by announcing that all speeches, including Sakharov's, would be limited to five minutes, in effect cutting him off in mid-flow. It was a pattern that was repeated at future sessions of the Congress, culminating in the famous incident when Gorbachev switched off the loudspeakers while Sakharov was still speaking. (He had already switched off the television cameras when challenged from the floor by a member of the Interregional Group of Deputies.)

Sakharov's account of the Congress fills the last chapter of *Moscow and Beyond* and is a wonderful climax to the memoirs as a whole. In these last pages, we observe Sakharov emerging as the undisputed leader of the Soviet opposition, the only man in the Congress with the courage, the vision, the depth of knowledge, and the breadth of understanding to go head to head with Gorbachev. Gorbachev himself seems to have recognized the fact; when Sakharov walked out during the voting for president, Gorbachev sought him out to ask why. Sakharov was approached by Gorbachev's closest aides, Alexander Yakovlev and Anatoly Lukyanov, to discuss contentious issues on the agenda, and finally, at the beginning of the second week, Gorbachev acceded to Sakharov's request for a personal meeting to discuss some of their main differences. The old dissident, with his usual bluntness, went straight to the point:

> Mikhail Sergeyevich ... there's a crisis of trust in the leadership and the Party. Your personal authority has dropped almost to zero. ... The country, and you personally, are at a crossroads—either accelerate the process of change to the maximum, or try to retain the administrative-command system in all of its aspects. In the first case you will have to rely on the left and you'll be able to count on the support of many brave and energetic people. In the second case,

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you know yourself whose support you'll have, but they will never forgive you for backing perestroika.

Gorbachev replied that he was tied to the policy of perestroika forever, but that he was against "big leaps" and dramatic gestures, and he was convinced that the people would understand him.

After some further discussion, Sakharov returned to his main point: "I'm very concerned that the only political result of the Congress will be your achievement of unlimited personal power—the 18th Brumaire in contemporary dress. You got this power without elections, you weren't even on the slate of candidates for the Supreme Soviet, and you became its chairman without even being a member."

Gorbachev: "What's the matter, didn't you want me to be elected?"

Sakharov: "You know that's not the case, that in my opinion no alternative to you exists. But I'm talking about principles, not personalities. And besides, you're vulnerable to pressure, to blackmail by people who control the channels of information. Even now they're saying that you took bribes in Stavropol, 160,000 rubles has been mentioned. A provocation? Then they'll find something else. Only election by the people can protect you from attack."

Gorbachev: "I'm absolutely clean. And I'll never submit to blackmail—not from the right, not from the left!"

The frankness of Sakharov's account of these meetings is extraordinary in the context of official Soviet reticence and the half-truths that pass for political memoirs in that country. One of the great virtues of his second volume is the light it throws on the negotiations of the Soviet political establishment in this time of turbulent change. For anyone interested in the vicissitudes of perestroika and glasnost it is essential reading, bringing the personalities and the forces alive with a clarity unmatched by any source I know.

This posthumous book also underscores the immense tragedy of Sakharov's death. It came too soon, cruelly depriving the opposition of its one figure of undoubted international stature. Allowing for the differences of detail, Sakharov's position before his death was analogous to that of other prominent former dissidents and human rights activists who have achieved power in ex-Communist Europe: Walesa, Mazowiecki, Havel, Dienstbier, Göncz, Tudjman, and Petrle. All these men were in the forefront of the ideological struggle against communism during the 1970s and 1980s, all made the leap from dissident to political leader, all progressed from wrestling with ethical, social, and human issues to grappling with affairs of state and the temptations of power, and all unexpectedly inherited the fruits of a lifetime of struggle, often against their own desires.

Sakharov did not exercise direct political power himself. The democratic revolution in the Soviet Union had made only partial gains by the time he died in December 1989. It has since been put into reverse. It is difficult to know exactly what Sakharov would have done when confronted with recent events in the Baltics. My guess is that he would have brought Russians out of their houses in the hundreds of thousands and challenged Gorbachev in the streets and the squares of the large cities. For he had predicted this outcome to Gorbachev's face, when he warned against his accumulation of power, and he would have fought it with his usual directness and stubbornness.

But in his absence, and in the present reaction in Russia, there seems to be no single figure with the moral authority and bravery to take his place. What is left are these memoirs, and his example. And there are signs of a Sakharov cult developing in the Soviet Union. In Yerevan, a street and a university fellowship have already been named for him. In Moscow, the city council has announced a competition for a public statue, and a Sakharov museum is being planned. The Academy of Sciences, which treated him so badly while he was alive, has announced plans for a Sakharov medal to be struck, and is also setting up a scholarship fund in his name. (In Israel, at the urging of Soviet Jewish immigrants, a public park has been named for him.)

These memorials are all richly deserved. And yet, as Pushkin noted more than a century and a half ago, Russians have a penchant for honoring famous men after their death, having spat upon them while they lived. There can be little doubt that this noble, modest man would have abhorred a cult, and been indifferent to empty invocations of his memory. The monument that Sakharov would have preferred, as these memoirs show, is a democratic and peaceful Russia in a democratic and peaceful world. ●

Shattering Memories

BY SIDRA DEKOVEN EZRAHI

Variable Directions
by Dan Pagis
translated by Stephen Mitchell

(North Point Press, 153 pp., $21.95, $9.95 paper)

The reconstruction of self and society in the wake of catastrophe involves heroic acts of containment and closure. Great walls are erected, monumental slabs and obelisks of granite and concrete, to contain the mourning, to keep the unburied dead from launching an untimely invasion. Memorial forests are planted to ground the remnants of former lives in a specific soil. Grandiose projects of restoration and regeneration are undertaken: parliaments and parks, buses and babies. Roles are assigned to the survivors of the catastrophe, specifying what to remember and what to forget, when to keen and when to leave off keening.

Dan Pagis was an Israeli poet and a survivor of the Holocaust who refused to stay within the assigned boundaries between lamentation and celebration, between past and present, between dispersion and repatriation, between poetry and prose, between the living and the dead. The dislocation and the loss that Pagis experienced as a child are transformed from events that can be contained, remembered, and superseded into a poetry of radical displacement.

Pagis was born in Radautz in 1930 and died in Jerusalem in 1986. Like Paul Celan, he grew up in the German-speaking Bukovina section of Romania and survived the Nazi occupation in various labor camps. Celan settled in France and continued to write in his native tongue, in what became, over the years, a restive German idiolect. The other displaced poet from Bukovina arrived in Palestine in 1946 and found his home in Hebrew poetry.

They met briefly on holy ground, in the holy tongue. Celan came to Hebrew gingerly, reverently, as he came

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to Jerusalem in the year before his suicide, on pilgrimage. The untranslated Hebrew words that punctuate the poems of his last decade are scattered references to the possibility of homecoming. In an address, in 1969, to the Hebrew Writers' Association, Celan acknowledged a sense of congruence between "inner and outer" landscapes, "the pride in every bit of green you planted," and "the joy over every newly won, felt, and fulfilled word." He seemed almost ready to surrender what he called "Jewish loneliness" to such an encounter. But, like so many Jewish wanderers who touch down on the ground of a possible homecoming, he could not linger.

Celan, whose "Todesfuge" acquired canonical status in postwar Germany, was to become increasingly sealed within the hermetic structures of his own poetic universe. Pagis, less widely acclaimed during his lifetime, remained at the most fundamental level a poet embedded in his culture. The German-Jewish poet who maintained that the only thing that had survived the war with him was his language had to reinvent that language to keep it his own: Celan performs his alchemy at the most basic linguistic unit, the neologisms in his later poems are barely communicable, and his image of poetry as a message washed ashore in a bottle posits his reader as a haphazard beachcomber. Pagis's dislocation occurs, by contrast, within the syntax of the social contract. His poetry is composed of—and decomposes—cultural archetypes and public rhetoric. Pagis never became the official poet whose words would be read on ceremonial occasions by the flicker of memorial candles; and yet, by blasting a hole in the culture so large that it exposes and undermines its deepest structures, his poetry claims a radical public presence.

In Pagis's work, every theological or ideological commonplace is dismantled by a sleight-of-hand:

Draft of a Reparations Agreement

All right, gentlemen who cry blue murder
as always,
nagging miracle-makers,
quiet!
Everything will be returned to its place,
paragraph after paragraph.
The scream back into the throat.
The gold teeth back to the gums.
The terror.
The smoke back to the tin chimney and
further on and inside
back to the hollow of the bones,
and already you will be covered with skin
and sinews and you will live,
look, you will have your lives back,
sit in the living room, read the evening
paper.
Here you are. Nothing is too late.
As to the yellow star:
it will be torn from your chest
immediately
and will emigrate
to the sky.

The wit that rescues this poetry from the pathos of its subject also deprives every sacred discourse of its compensations. Conflating the debate about German reparations in Israel in the 1950s with Ezekiel's eschatological vision undermines both politics and prophecy. In "Siege," a casualty of the Roman-Jewish wars of the first century prepares, from his ossuary, to answer a call-up of the Israeli reserves: "I gather myself, lift my bones, / put on skin and muscles, my full-dress uniform, / and report to the regiment / right now, in the end of days." That nothing in historical time can provide reparation or restitution for disrupted lives is manifested in the poet's defiance of the historical procession itself. Suspended haphazardly between the beginning and the end of days, the present moment is robbed of its sovereignty.

Within the highly charged Zionist celebration of history and territory as the instruments of Jewish redemption, Pagis's embrace of an undifferentiated universe, timeless and placeless, defined him as a kind of exile in the Holy Land, and his poetry as an exile from the poetry of homecoming. In a society in which utopian lenses are designed to secure the separation of past, present, and future, and to foreclose the imagination of alternative worlds, the persistence of realms not safely contained at a temporal and geographical distance is subversive. Pagis's countertexts defy not only historical consciousness, but also a teleological reading that grants history a destination.

Heirs to a literary and philosophical tradition with its primary source in biblical lamentations, modern Israeli poets continue to engage that tradition even through thick veils of irony. The rhetoric of religious consolation that served centuries of Jewish survivors found its most powerful secular expression in Zionism, specifically in the Zionist narrative of modern Jewish history as a dialectic of destruction and rebirth. Most Hebrew writers have not shared the mystical historiosophy of the late "poet laureate" Uri Zvi Greenberg, who established causal links between the death of the Jews in Europe and the birth of the Jewish nation in Israel, but there is a basic common regard for the redemptive agency of Jewish memory. Whereas modern literature tends to focus on the birth and death of the individual as liminal events in the otherwise fragmented biography of the self, in much of contemporary Hebrew writing the composite body outlives, and continues to salvage meaning from, the demise of its parts.

The Holocaust is the source, rather than the object, of Pagis's slantwise view of the world. Few of his poems are specific enough to be identified as "Holocaust poems." Most of them lack either the referential or the confessional substance that generally characterizes the writing of survivors. Pagis chose to engage neither the testimonial language of witness nor the archetypes of martyrdom. In some instances, the reality invoked in the title of a poem ("Draft of a Reparations Agreement," "Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway-Car," "The Roll Call," "Testimony") seems to confer a documentary status against which the poem itself rebels:

Instructions for Crossing the Border

Imaginary man, go. Here is your passport.
You are not allowed to remember.
You have to match the description:
your eyes are already blue.
Don't escape with the sparks
inside the smokestack:
you are a man, you sit in the train.
Sit comfortably.
You've got a decent coat now,
a repaired body, a new name
ready in your throat.
Go. You are not allowed to forget.

The unmentioned event is the fulcrum of a vision that locates progress in intergalactic, evolutionary, or anatomical spheres, rather than in any humanly constructed scheme. General historical and specific Jewish terms of reference are supplanted by the language of an ape who "emigrates" ("The Readiness") or a human brain in "exile" ("Brain").

Pagis exercised poetic options that may have marginalized him within the Israeli literary world and limited the scope of his readers. Leaning beyond irony to parody, beyond displacement toward decomposition, beyond colloquial to depersonalized speech, Pagis both participated in and deviated from the modernist project in Hebrew poetry. His conceits, fables, riddles, and parables may often have appeared thematically

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and formally archaic—or futuristic. A few of his poems were widely read in his lifetime, but the real conversation with Pagis is likely to begin when his collected works appear posthumously later this year—partly, no doubt, due to the hagiography that accrues to dead poets, but also because Israeli society, under the press of circumstance, is re-examining some of its primary myths.

Because Pagis, like Kafka, does not create a universe that is either mimetically coherent or allegorically insistent, his words are constantly reattaching themselves to changing reality, and are not exhausted by any historical moment or interpretive act. They are restless presences in his culture, even when they appear to be indifferent to public discourse. In a late poem, the machinery of death seems to find poetic justice in the lamentations that have turned to gallows humor:

An Opening to Satan

As he waited in front of the new invention,
Danton said, "The verb *to guillotine*
(this brand-new verb of ours) is limited
in the tenses and persons of its conjugation:
for example, I shall not have a chance to say
I was guillotined."

Acute and poignant, that sentence, but
naive.
Here am I (and I'm nobody special),
I was beheaded
I was hanged
I was burned
I was shot
I was massacred.
I was forgotten.
(But why give an opening to Satan?—
he might still recall
that, morally at least,
for the time being, I've won.)

This lesson in the competing grammars of martyrology reads at first like an innocent (if somewhat whimsical) update of the medieval laments that still form a part of the Jewish liturgy. But present political realities place a new construction on the poem: the poet's untimely death spared him the pain of recording the transformed grammar of a people some of whose passive verbs have learned to become active. Still, running as an undercurrent throughout his verse is an implicit recognition of the dialectics of power and powerlessness. In "Brothers," Cain dreams that he is Abel; presumably, in this world of infinite complementarities, his brother is having the corresponding dream. Indeed, the repeated appearance in Pagis's poetry of Cain and Abel as the composite figure of victim and victimizer may be seen as a significant replacement for Isaac as the Jewish sacrificial and covenantal victim.

Pagis's unraveling of the chronological order, his free-floating images that are referential in origin but unmoored from historical context, denote a radical exercise of the poetic prerogative:

Ready for Parting

Ready for parting, as if my back were
turned,
I see my dead come toward me, transparent
and breathing.
I do not consent:
one walk around the square, one rain,
and I am another, with imperfect rims, like
clouds.
Gray in the passing town, passing and glad,
among transitory streetlamps,
wearing my strangeness like a coat, I am
free to stand
with the people who stand at the opening of
a moment
in a chance doorway, anonymous as
raindrops
and, being strangers, near and flowing one
into another.

Ready for parting, waiting awhile
for the signs of my life which appear in the
chipped plaster
and look out from the grimy windowpane.
A surprise of roses.
Bursting out and already future, twisted
into its veins—
a blossoming to every wind. Perhaps
not in my own time into myself and from
myself and onward
from gate within gate I will go out into the
jungle of rain,
free to pass on like one who has tried his
strength
I will go out
from the space in between as if from the
walls of denial.

The "denial" (*kefira*) is cosmic, a naysaying that dismantles every idiom into its component parts and then recombines them to expose their status as purely verbal constructs. The denial extends to the poetic subject, the lyric possibility, the language of human emotion. The idioms, like the people, are tested by dislocation; the imperceptible transition from one state (of being, of mind, of territory) to another is effected by an interchange of time and place. The "passing town" and the "transitory streetlamps" are not the fixed objects of a nostalgic mind yearning for home. The self is not grounded by gravitational forces, nor is it contained in the signs of its private existence—"chipped plaster," the "grimy windowpane," "a surprise of roses." It is an undefined, unbounded entity let loose in the galaxy "like clouds" (or, elsewhere, like a wind from "variable directions"). A centrifugal force liberates the speakers in these poems—and they are voices more than persons—from the burden of consistency, of integrity, of memory. In a subtle exchange, things remember better than people do.

The language itself is, on the surface, as light and playful, as free of gravity, as the beings who move weightlessly and diaphanously between the living and the dead. "But what's this, my good angel is stirring, he lectures and finally shouts: 'What [nerve] . . . it is to swim among the drowned, / and you make this into a sport? For shame!' " The reader of these poems may be similarly chagrined by the unruliness, the impiety of one who traffics shamelessly with the dead and does not respect their otherness. Within the terms of the debate over the status of poetic language that has focused on Celan's "Todesfuge," and was inaugurated by Adorno's much-misquoted dictum ("after Auschwitz, to write poetry is barbaric"), Pagis's recombinant imagination generates both keen pleasure in the dazzling display of verbal antics and a shock of recognition that leaves nothing in the reader's world quite intact.

Pagis's poetry is marked more by absence than by presence; it is a poetry of the empty page that dismantles the story that Israel writes, that effaces the tale that the survivor tells. And yet it appears that, at the end of his days, there was a dramatic change. In his final work, Pagis instructed his reader that the empty page was an effacement, and seemed even on the verge of deciphering the code that would make the banished words visible:

> You ask me how I write. I'll tell you, but let this be confidential. I take a ripe onion, squeeze it, dip the pen into the juice, and write. It makes excellent invisible ink: the onion juice is colorless (like the tears the onion causes), and after it dries it doesn't leave any mark. The page again appears as pure as it was. Only if it's brought close to the fire will the writing be revealed, at first hesitantly, a letter here, a letter there, and finally, as it should be, each and every sentence. There's just one problem. No one knows the secret power of the fire, and who would suspect that the pure page has anything written on it?

Such an intimation, from one who was not only a master of modern Hebrew poetry but also the greatest modern scholar of medieval Hebrew poetry and, in his last work, of the riddle literature of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, was enough to reillumina[illegible] the texts. The passage above not only announced, it also enacted, a new poetics: the last volume published in Pagis's lifetime included a number of such "prose poems," and papers discovered in his estate and published posthumously form part of a larger prose work titled *Abba* (Father).

As Pagis's taut poetic line gave way to a looser, less textured, decidedly prosaic surface, the possibility of historical dis-

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course could be invoked. In time, acts of private memory might have followed. Addressing the riddle of the absent father in the poetry—the father who had left his young family in 1934 and emigrated to Palestine, the father with whom the poet was reunited after the war but with whom real communion seems to have begun only in the short interim between the father's death and the son's—*Abba* appears to have been Pagis's first attempt to exercise, almost conventionally, the literary prerogative of reclaiming the past.

For those Hebrew readers who had become accustomed to meeting Pagis in his no man's land between the living and the dead, his posthumous works, and the incipient change of direction signaled by the last manuscripts, feed the illusion of a historically particular voice speaking from beyond the grave. But the reader of *Variable Directions* would hardly know this. Poems and prose passages are presented here not chronologically, but in loosely thematic order, conveying little or no sense of the evolution of the poet's voice.

The book suffers also from the absence of the original texts, which one has come to expect as part of the contemporary apparatus of translation. In 1981 Stephen Mitchell published translations of Pagis in a bilingual edition; produced in collaboration with the poet, those translations became sanctioned interpretations or versions of the original. Armchairs that had appeared humbly in the Hebrew salon were upgraded and transported to hotel lobbies in the English—providing, on facing pages, a glimpse into the translator's workshop. That such a format is even more essential for translations undertaken after the poet's death goes without saying. Mitchell's versions often attain an admirable transparency, but the cultural transaction is weighted in favor of American spaces. One of the verses I cited above reads, in Mitchell's translation: "What chutzpah it is to swim among the drowned, / and you make this into a sport?" The decision to leave "chutzpah" as a lone survivor of the original is a sign of the word's migrant status in the American lexicon, not of its centrality in the poem.

Still, if Pagis's subversion of the codes of his culture lends his poetry a unique translocal force, Mitchell's translations grant it the mobility it deserves. For nothing in Pagis's poetic universe really stays put. The disruptive power of this work, which remains outside the paradigm that has evolved in Israel to contain the Holocaust, will not diminish with time. As the formulas and the rituals of remembrance proliferate, it is the numbing effect of convention, the banality and the predictability of commemorative practices and passages, that this poetry rails against. Forty-five years after the liberation of Auschwitz, the average participant at a Holocaust Day memorial ceremony in Israel merely yawns in anticipation of the "dry bones" passage from Ezekiel that inevitably precedes one of those pyrotechnical poems in which the last embers of the Warsaw Ghetto ignite the torches of redemption in the new state. The yawn catches rudely in the windpipe, however, when instead we stumble upon that "scream [returned to] the throat, / The gold teeth back to the gums. . . ." Just as we think that we have entered the "safe" precincts of historical narrative or "collective memory," Pagis shifts the lens just enough to deprive us of the comfort of such formulaic resolutions. We wander through Pagis's poems thoroughly exposed, facing over and over again, without the consolations of convention, the shock of events never quite recounted:

> I won't mention names
> out of consideration for the reader,
> since at first the details horrify
> though finally they're a bore . . . .

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The Longer March

BY ARTHUR WALDRON

China's Crisis: Dilemmas of Reform and Prospects for Democracy by Andrew J. Nathan

(Columbia University Press, 242 pp., $24.50, $12.95 paper)

Why has democracy failed, thus far, to take root in China? During the nearly twenty years that Andrew Nathan has taught Chinese politics at Columbia, he has repeatedly returned to this question, and so does *China's Crisis*. Indeed, as we learn from this collection of his essays, Nathan has taken seriously the possibility of Chinese democracy from the time he entered the field of Chinese studies, in the days of the Cultural Revolution. His first book, published in 1976, dealt with the failure of constitutionalism in the early Chinese republic. At that time it seemed a slightly odd topic, for many believed that issues of constitutionalism and democracy were irrelevant to China; typical was the assertion, which Nathan quotes, by a Quaker delegation visiting the People's Republic in 1972: "The American social experience of pluralism and diversity and relatively ungoverned U.S. economy do not constitute a lens through which Americans can successfully examine the basis of Chinese society."

Nathan has always rejected such relativism. Partly, perhaps, this is a matter of personal conviction (he is active in Amnesty International), but also, no doubt, it owes much to the way he pursues his subject and his discipline. Like others, Nathan seeks Chinese friends and is trusted by them. He listens very carefully, and unlike more journalistic students of China, Nathan checks what his friends tell him by systematically plowing through acres of documents, official and unofficial. Moreover, as a political scientist, he tests what he finds against models, particularly against models that suggest whether and how authoritarian societies can become democratic. He has always understood that the question of Chinese democracy is as much about democracy—how and why democracy develops in some societies but not in others—as it is about China.

A reader unfamiliar with Nathan's work, however, might get well into *China's Crisis* before glimpsing the author's true originality. "Confessions of a China Watcher" provides an engaging account of his own intellectual evolution (though Nathan is hardly the first China-watcher to confess), and "A Factionalism Model for [Chinese Communist Party] Politics," which was first published in 1973, is straight political science, applying to China a model derived from the study of France, innovative at the time but now thoroughly absorbed by his field. His analysis of political risk, written in the

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Israel, the Arabs, & Human Rights (1)

We Americans are much concerned with human rights. Of late, much of this concern has been focused on the Middle East. Remarkably, however, virtually all of that concern seems to be directed towards Israel, and hardly any of it to the Arab states in bitter and perpetual conflict with Israel. Is Israel's human rights record really that bad? Is that of the Arabs really that good?

What are the facts?

■ The Western world compares Israel to the Western democracies and applies to Israel Western standards of behavior, especially in the area of human rights. Israel is, of course, a democracy, in which the liberties that we take for granted are equally available to all citizens—Jews and Arabs alike. Among the Arab countries, not a single one adheres to even minimal standards of human rights. While to us in the United States, the human rights performance of other countries is mostly a matter of abstraction, it is a daily reality for Israel. They have to live with it. Israel expects to and is expected to adhere to high principles. But the enemies surrounding it, virtually all of them (with the notable exception of Egypt) having Israel's destruction close to the top of their agendas, do not play "by the rules".

■ For instance, Israel is bitterly denounced and condemned for having deported a handful of Palestinians, who were convicted of crimes against public order. Compare that with the routine expulsion of people from the Arab nations. The Palestinians, who are residents of most countries of the Middle East, are particularly vulnerable to expulsion, for the most insignificant offenses, or simply because their presence is not deemed to be in the best interest of the host. Tiny Kuwait, for instance, deported over 27,000 (!) people in 1986, many Palestinians among them. In February of 1988, Kuwait expelled many more, in order to quell demonstrations supporting Palestinian rioters in the territories administered by Israel.

■ Much is made of the loss of life in Israel and in the administered territories since the beginning of the so-called "intifada". But, in view of how long this has been going on and considering the violence and the hatred on the part of the Arabs, it is remarkable how few people have died. The relatively small number of casualties is testimonial to the restraint of the Israeli military and the Israeli government. Who can doubt that the "intifada" could have been suppressed in a few days, had Israel followed the cruel norms of the area in which it is located. Some Arab states conduct wholesale massacres of political opponents as state policy. In 1982, for instance, Syrian president Hafez Assad ordered the killing of over 20,000 civilians in the city of Hama. Iraq routinely executes so many people for bizarre "offenses" (such as insulting the president) that Amnesty International has given up counting them. Iraq has also recently reached a new low in human rights abuse by killing more than 5,000 of its own Kurdish citizens by poison gas, because they were not thought to be politically reliable. The Democratic Republic of Yemen holds periodic mass executions. Even the so-called "moderates" among the Arab states know how to handle civil disobedience "efficiently". Saudi Arabia, where slaves are still being kept and where public amputations for small offenses are the norm, killed over 400 Muslim pilgrims in one bloody day in Mecca in 1987. Egyptian troops killed over 100 people during riots in 1986. In April of 1989, Algerian government troops opened fire in the city of Souk Ahras against Algerian citizens who were protesting food prices and corruption. The army didn't hesitate to machine-gun 350 people to death in less than an hour.

■ Much effort is expended in criticizing Israel's human rights record in its treatment of the Palestinians in the administered territories. In the climate of violence created by the intifada, during which hundreds of Palestinians have been killed by their fellow Arabs, the occasional act of violence by individual Israelis is perhaps to be expected. Every such violation is contrary to explicit laws and standing military orders and is investigated, prosecuted and punished. Compare that with the human rights violations and the ruthlessness of the Arab states against the Palestinians living in their midst. In 1970, during the "Black September" riots, Jordanian military killed 3,400 Palestinians in just 10 days. In 1976, the Syrian army killed over 23,000 Palestinians. In the three-year "war of the camps", the death toll of Palestinians reached over 3,000. At least that number of Palestinians is reported to languish in Syrian prisons.

Israel is a democratic country, with a freely elected government that is fully responsible to its citizens for its actions. It is the only such country in the entire Middle East. It shares with the Western democracies a fundamental commitment to human rights. Israeli society is totally open and accessible to the media of all countries. Individual human rights violations are promptly put under the microscope of public scrutiny. In contrast, virtually all Arab countries are ruled by self-appointed tyrants and are secretive and closed societies. Their massive and brutal human rights abuses go largely unreported. Journalists and T.V. reporters are allowed in these countries by invitation only. When there, they'd better know what to report and how to report it if they don't wish to be killed, kidnapped, or officially "tried" and executed, as recently happened in Iraq.

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mid-1980s, looks good in retrospect, and his review of American views of China is insightful. But Nathan really hits his stride when he addresses human rights and democracy, a full hundred pages into the book.

In 1988 China appeared to be on the verge of a major turn in the direction of democracy, and Nathan's chapters on that year, both written before the sudden end of the reform movement, show all his strengths. With great lucidity he guides the reader over China's political and economic landscape, right up to the edge of the gulf separating it from real pluralism. Will China try to cross over? Not knowing the answer, Nathan closes by noting the internal pressures for and against the development of pluralism, correctly identifying the army and, above all, Deng Xiaoping as arbiters of the decision.

At this point Nathan's argument takes a surprising swerve. Most writers, one suspects, would have cut directly to the Beijing Massacre of June 1989. Nathan looks to an entirely different area, one in which he is also an expert: Taiwan. Unlike many American China specialists, Nathan did not make the mistake of going to Taiwan to study the Chinese language, then forgetting the island when travel to the mainland became possible. In the years since Washington and Beijing established diplomatic relations, Nathan has kept abreast of developments in Taiwan; he even writes occasional columns for one of the island's leading newspapers. And Taiwan, because of its rapid and decisive democratization, provides an excellent comparative perspective from which to view the mainland.

At one time Taiwan and the mainland were more similar than sympathizers of either liked to admit. Both were poor, both were ruled by Leninist parties. By the late 1960s, however, it was apparent that poverty would be overcome in Taiwan, and of course the "Taiwan model" is now widely copied. But the political future of Taiwan under the Kuomintang party was far less clear. Chiang Kai-shek was no democrat, and his son and heir Chiang Ching-kuo first made his name as his father's feared security chief. By the 1970s, therefore, many worried that the island might face an explosive future, with bloody confrontations, as an increasingly affluent and educated population demanded rights that their autocratic rulers refused to grant. In fact, the 1970s did bring a series of violent encounters to the island.

Long before the Tiananmen massacre occurred in Beijing, something like it seemed possible for Taipei as well. But the incidents of the 1970s proved to be

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tremors of an earthquake that never came. To the great surprise of many, the Taipei government liberalized—cautiously at first, then with increasing speed and confidence. Elections grew in importance; an opposition developed, first informally, then formally, into legally recognized opposition parties; the press became free. In short, Taiwan embarked on a genuine transition to democracy, the first ever in a region of Chinese culture. Popular pressure for such a transition was strong, but it would probably not have occurred without the guidance of one man: Chiang Ching-kuo, effective ruler of Taiwan from 1975 until his death in 1988.

Some comparison seems essential between Chiang Ching-kuo and Deng Xiaoping. If we consider only the young Chiang, the security chief, we might say he was similar to Deng: a man who understood power and was willing to use it. In his later years, however, Chiang carried out the task before which Deng flinched: he yielded power not only for himself, but for his regime, and he installed a democratic process. Nor did he do so grudgingly; he used his own unmatched personal authority to force democratization on unwilling colleagues.

How to explain the difference? Nathan does his best to offer a systematic political science account. Democratic transitions occur, he maintains, when they appear to offer some advantage to the existing elite. Thus, Taiwan in the 1970s found itself confronted by growing internal dissatisfaction, increasing diplomatic isolation, and a dependence on trade with countries that urged it to democratize. It made sense for the ruling party to lead reform, and thus to win credit for it. Moreover—this is an important point—while the Kuomintang was a Leninist party in organization, its avowed ideology was democratic rather than Marxist. To move toward real democracy involved no intellectual contradiction.

In retrospect, though, we can see that the transition was neither inevitable nor predestined. The role of Chiang Ching-kuo was critical, and he played it brilliantly, maintaining "a concentrated hold on power in order to be able to disperse it," and implementing reform measures "quickly enough to prevent the consolidation of conservative opposition, but not so quickly as to allow the pace of events to get out of control."

Could Deng Xiaoping have done the same in China? Nathan's answer is a qualified yes. Unlike many observers, Nathan believes that China's society and economy possess the basic preconditions for democratic transition. The failure to cross over the gulf in 1989 was not the society's, it was the regime's. Nathan implicitly speculates that Deng, facing the democracy movement of 1989, could have followed the Chiang Ching-kuo model. That would have meant handing power over to Zhao Ziyang, which Deng repeatedly stated was his intention. Zhao could then easily have pacified the students by opening discussions with them and repudiating the *People's Daily*'s attacks on their movement and motives. Deng would have retired full of glory, and after his death would have been elevated to the pantheon of Chinese sage-rulers.

Deng, of course, faltered. Still, Nathan clearly believes that some Chinese politician will sooner or later lead the breakthrough. In his conclusion, Nathan speaks not of what Chinese democracy "would" be like, but of what it "will" be like. Yet his scenario for the shorter term is not entirely rosy. The lack of meaningful reform in China, coupled with rapid democratization in Taiwan, conjures up the risk of confrontation. Perhaps the most important chapter in the book—it should be read by every person concerned with future international politics in Asia—outlines the implications of Taiwan's domestic democratization for foreign policy.

Those implications are serious. While the island's internal democratization makes it both a more legitimate and a more assertive actor internationally, Beijing shows no willingness to accommodate it. Instead, rhetoric has hardened and threats of force have been reiterated. A reader may well reflect that a government willing to kill its own people in the streets of Beijing would probably feel few qualms about launching a crusade to "recover" Taiwan, particularly if doing so would provide patriotic legitimacy in the face of a deteriorating internal situation or problems with the transfer of Hong Kong. Thus, the potential exists for a new Taiwan Straits crisis, in which the United States would inevitably become involved.

The question of whether things will come to that brings us back to the big question at the heart of Nathan's book: Chinese democracy. A liberalizing regime in China would have little difficulty accepting measures that would resolve the Taiwan anomaly, and would make available for the mainland's modernization some of Taiwan's experience, dynamism, and wealth. But Beijing is dangerously immobile, for political reasons. Factional politics, as Nathan shows, doomed the constitutional movement that he analyzed in his first book. Similar factional politics may now doom Chinese democracy for a time, and even threaten the peace of Asia. And yet the model of democratic transition expounded so clearly in Nathan's book provides a powerful tool for analyzing democratic politics in general, and a persuasive reason for hope about China.

ARTHUR WALDRON is the author of *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth* (Cambridge University Press).

TRB *continued from page 4*

the prosperity of the white minority.

Any serious exercise in redistribution, whether through taxes or nationalization of resources or whatever, will itself impede growth. (For a possible exception, see "One Man, One Share" by Thomas Hazlett, TNR, December 31, 1990. He proposes a massive giveaway of government-owned assets.) But just to concede that redistribution is inefficient doesn't put it beyond bounds. Blacks, like whites, are entitled to think of the slices as well as the pie.

How much white prosperity will be impinged upon is the biggest unresolved political question. Hard economics—who gets what—lies behind much of the theoretical debate about the shape of the new constitution. Whites want guarantees against nationalization, redistribution, and other statist meddling. The ANC is making no promises. Of course the white establishment's passion for hands-off government is as recent in economics as it is in civil liberties. The present South African economy is heavily regulated and dominated by state industries and government-sanctioned cartels. It is better described as corporate statism than as free market capitalism. Just lately, though, the government has developed an enthusiasm for privatization. No prizes for guessing why.

Over a drink at a fancy hotel in a Johannesburg suburb called Sandton, I asked Saki Macozoma of the ANC whether Harry Oppenheimer, head of the giant Anglo-American conglomerate, ought to fear majority rule. He said, "People at the level of Harry Oppenheimer needn't be concerned in any event. The more important question is: Will a person with a middle-class job and a maid and a pool lose that? Yes, they will have to lose some of that because we don't have the resources. . . . People say, Moderate the expectations of your people. I say we will moderate our expectations *pari passu* [in step] with Sandton. I can't say to people in Soweto, Forget about running water while people in Sandton have two German cars." A pretty good answer, I thought.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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AMMAN DIARIST

Souk kook

ON A RECENT FRIDAY AFTERNOON, the big, old, elegant Al-Hussein mosque in Amman was momentarily quiet, its loudspeakers silent between the 11:30 and 3:30 calls to prayer. The sidewalks and streets around the market area were filled with young men in Italian-cut slacks, soldiers in olive drab, women in brilliantly embroidered ankle-length robes, giggling girls, and shy-faced boys. (Think of Manhattan's garment district with ten times its normal quotient of people, but with everybody moving in an unexpected fluid neatness, no one's body ever touching anyone else's body, all gliding and eliding by.) The crowd was there to bargain and buy, one of the great occupations and preoccupations of the Arab world. There was much to purchase: pistachio nuts, peanuts, walnuts, almonds, and raisins; saccharine-sweet white custard by the bowl, with honey dripped on top; sandwiches of shaved lamb, with tomatoes and onions wrapped in greased, hot pita bread; fresh fruit milk shakes and sweet Turkish coffee by the cup; suits made to order on the spot; unheard of perfumes and novelty-brand radios; knock-off cigarettes called "Marlbril." And so on, and on. Not much ever changes, except money between hands.

BUT THIS AFTERNOON THERE WAS one little plot of entrepreneurial turf where the bustle (and the hustle) was clearly something special. In front of the little storefront of the Al-Afghani Company, a camera crew was busily recording for history ... the door. A dozen passers-by had stopped to watch this oddity. Inside the shop, three more reporters—a Brit, a German, and a Dutchman—hip-nudged and elbow-poked each other in the tiny, narrow aisle. They watched the scene before them with the hungry attention of the professional voyeur. Being myself one such, I watched too. At one end of the cluttered glass counter, a man stood working with a hacksaw and a vise, separating a half-dozen freshly stamped metal figures from their metal brackets. At the other end, another craftsman was soldering alligator clips onto the back of each pin.

SINCE JANUARY 19, TWO DAYS AFTER Saddam Hussein first dropped Scud missiles on Israel, Fouad Afghani, proprietor, has been doing land-rush business in the mementos of death wish. The metal pins were die-stamped, engraved replicas of the Scuds Saddam fired on Israel. Painted and polished, they would become cheap brooches and key rings. The rafters of Mr. Afghani's little shop, and the walls, are hung with the usual items of Mideast tourist trade—brass and tin coffee pots, costume-bejeweled brass scimitars, sweet, suffering Christs of machine-carved olive wood—but the hot tickets on the exchange now are all about the death and suffering of the folks in Tel Aviv. He sells buttons too. The samples hung on the door were what the TV crew was filming. Mr. Afghani designs them himself. They are sturdy and well painted, and as big around as a beer can. All of them bear a photo of the smiling Saddam, and a cartoon figure of a speeding Al Hussein missile, as Saddam has renamed his Russian-made Scuds. One says (in English, like them all): "East or West, Scud is best." Another declares, next to the picture of a speeding Scud: "Saddam, One Like You Makes Dream Come True." A third shows the beach at Tel Aviv, with a pair of bare feet next to army boots, and underneath a neon sign that flashes "Israel" with two Scuds bearing down on it. The writing next to them: "Wherever you hide, Al-Hussein ('Scud') is going to FIND!" The most virulent depicts the falling Scuds next to the words, "Israel is Cancer and Al Hussein (Scud) is answer."

THE KEY RINGS, PINS, AND BUTtons have been selling very well. Mr. Afghani began making the key rings on Monday, and by Saturday had sold, as far as he could figure, at least 3,000. Of the Scud cartoon buttons, at least 2,000 had been sold. Related sales have likewise been booming. Cheap but gaudy watches with Saddam's beaming visage are a steady mover: 500 sold in the past five months. At the low end of the market, general-purpose Saddam buttons (without the pointed Scud message) have been making the cash register ring nonstop since August 2: about 300,000 sold to date.

NONE OF THIS IS A SURPRISE. Jordan is, after all, half Palestinian. The country is filled with people like Mr. Afghani, for whom anger and hatred is bred in the bone. In 1948, when the first Arab-Israeli war was raging and Afghani was six months old, his father moved the family from the city of Jaffa, next door to Tel Aviv. Afghani has never returned, and he will not, as long as going to Jaffa means being questioned and searched first by Israeli soldiers. But there's a twist to the story, one that is both mildly encouraging and, for those interested in the corruptive interaction between the media and that which it covers, mildly interesting. In the whole of Amman's big, bustling downtown, in this city where 70 percent of the population is Palestinian, Mr. Afghani's store was the only one selling Scud key rings and pins celebrating the fall of Scuds on Israel. At the Intercontinental Hotel, where most of the hundreds of Western journalists in town are camping, the location of Mr. Afghani's store is as well known as the location of the hotel bar. That's why the camera crew was there, and the three other reporters, and me. We were there to catch a bit of ugly vox populi on the quick and easy.

BUT LISTEN TO WHAT MR. AFGHANI has to say about why business is booming. "About 80 percent of our sales, maybe more, are to journalists," he said, pointing behind him to the wall where he hangs the orders he takes over the phone for the hot new mementos. The scraps of paper all bore orders from the press corps: "TV-Spain—10 Scuds ... Ingrid Tonquist, Marriott Room 827—20 Scuds ... CNN, Kris—5 Iraqi maps ..." "Oh, yes," said Mr. Afghani, "it is almost all journalists. Some Jordanians want to buy Scud key rings, because they do not cost so much as the Saddam watches, but I do not sell to them. They only want to buy one or two, and we have too much trouble keeping up with the rush for that. We only take the bigger orders, ten pieces or more, and they are mostly from journalists." After all, he said, with the inarguable logic of a third-generation merchant, "It is much better for me to sell ten pieces to one person than one piece to ten person. Maybe later, we will sell to Jordanians. Right now—to journalists. That is where the business is."

MICHAEL KELLY

Michael Kelly is a TNR special correspondent.

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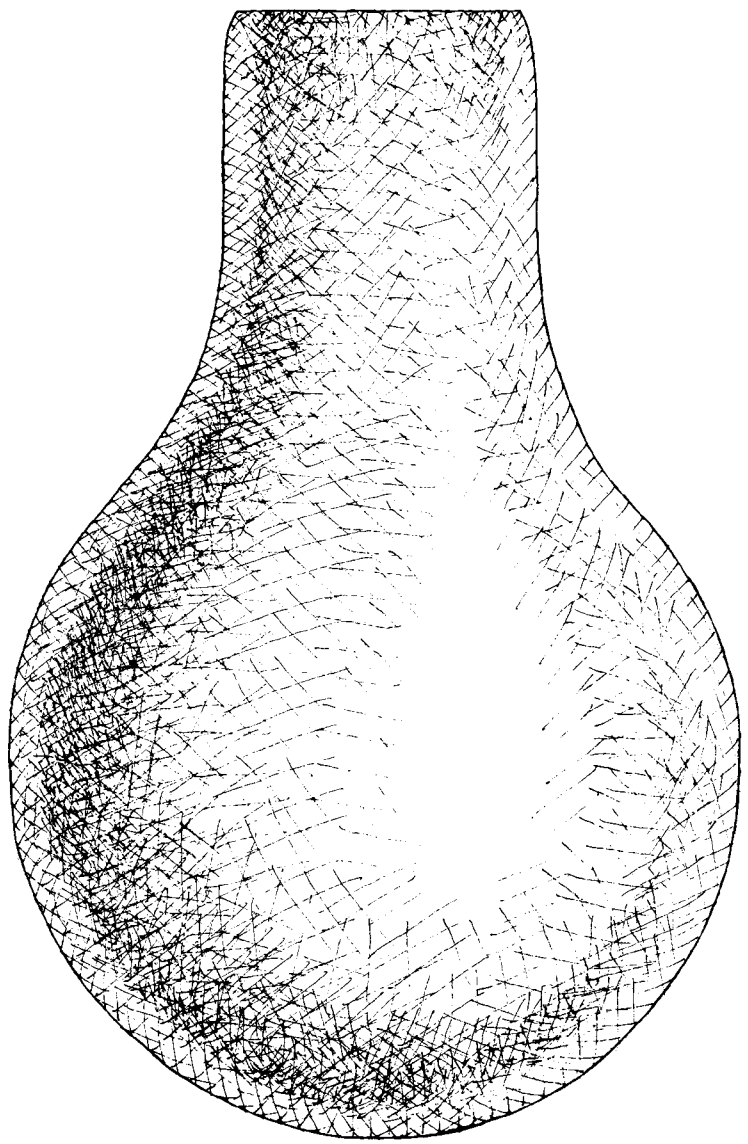
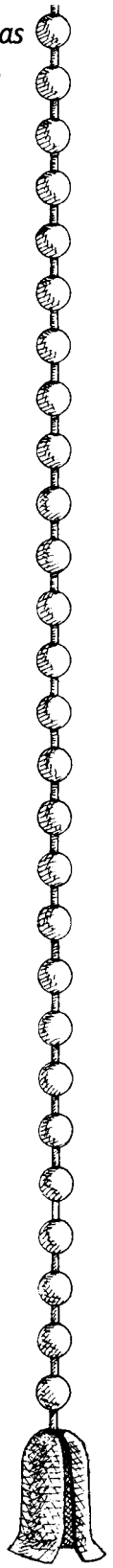
Everyone agrees we'll soon be needing more electricity. But there's little agreement on how to get it. Especially with the environment at stake. ❧ *Hydropower is limited by geography. Nuclear energy's problems continue to be debated. And the sun, the wind, the tides — they're all attractive, but none is economically practical on a broad scale yet.* ❧ *So, for at least the near future, we're going to have to rely, for the most part, on fossil fuels.* ❧ *But all fossil fuels are not created equal. One is clearly best for the environment. And that's natural gas.* ❧ *Natural gas produces less carbon dioxide emissions, it produces no sulfur dioxide, and it creates no particulates — the visible smoke you see. All of these are serious air pollutants.* ❧ *Further, because new high-efficiency, gas-powered generating plants are relatively simple to build, gas is also one of the quickest and cheapest ways for producers of electricity to increase their output.* ❧ *In short, if natural gas didn't exist, we'd have to invent it. As it is, nature has given us vast resources of natural gas right here in North America. It just seems natural to use them.*





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